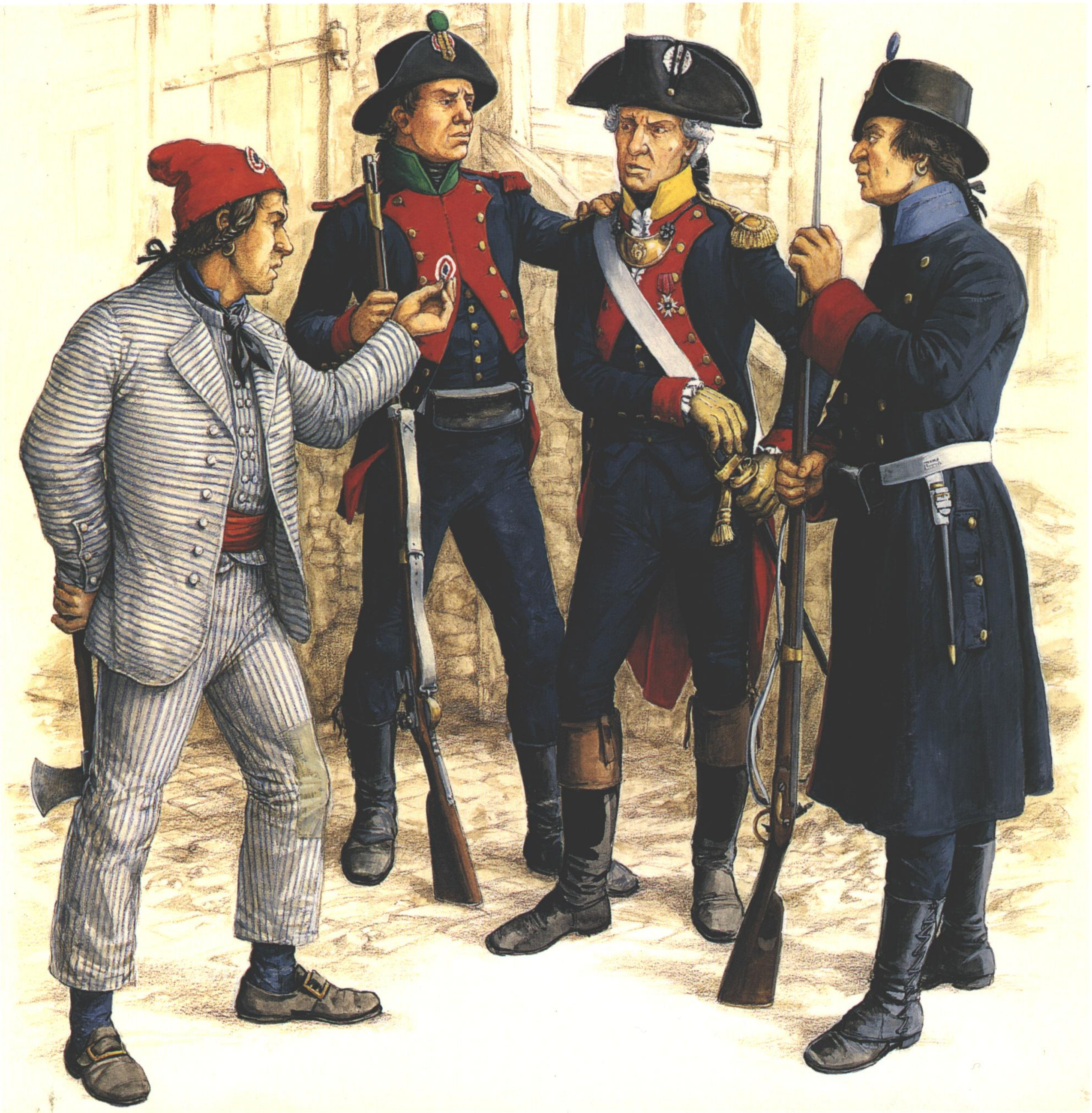
OSPREY
MILITARY

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

227

NAPOLEON'S SEA SOLDIERS



RENÉ CHARTRAND FRANCIS BACK

Chronology

1789 Bastille taken on 14 July—start of the French Revolution. *25 August*: Declaration of the Rights of Man. *1 December*: mutiny of sailors in the Toulon fleet.

1790 *October*: difficulties concerning the introduction of the tricolour flag in the Navy.

1792 *20 April*. France declares war on Austria and Prussia. *10 August*: Tuilleries taken and royal family imprisoned. *22 September*: the Republic is proclaimed.

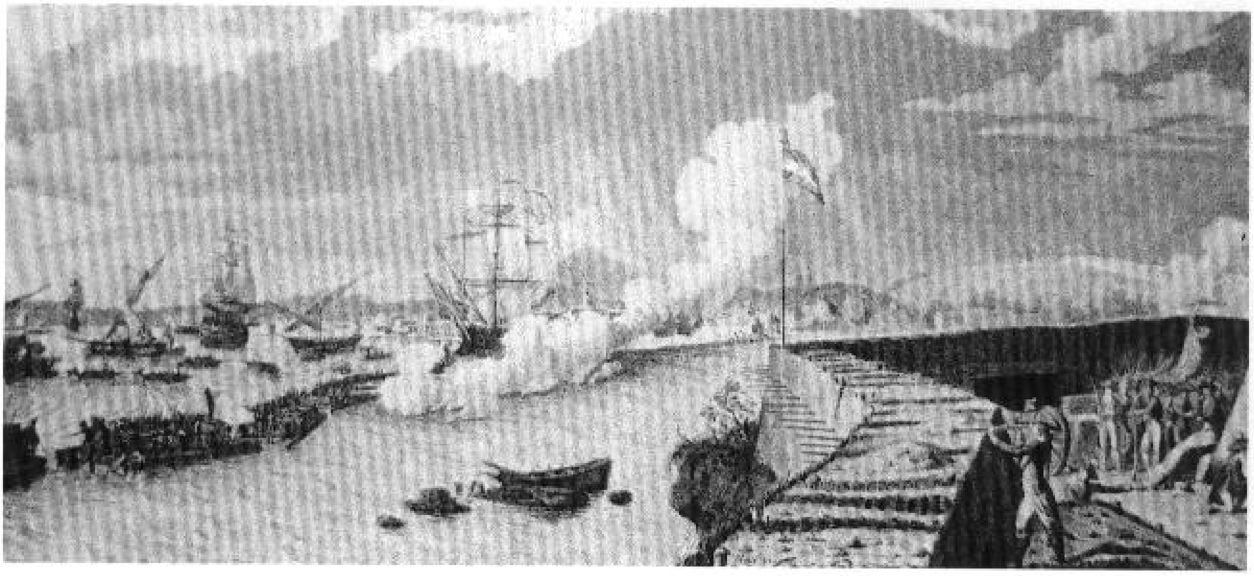
1793 *21 January:* Louis XVI executed. *1 February*: England, Spain, Holland, Sardinia, Naples and Portugal at war with France. *July–October*: French fleet from Saint-Domingue at New York. *27 August–19 December*: Toulon occupied by British and royalists.

1794 *February-August*: Corsica revolts against France and is occupied by the British. *1 June*: British fleet defeats French fleet ('Glorious First of June').

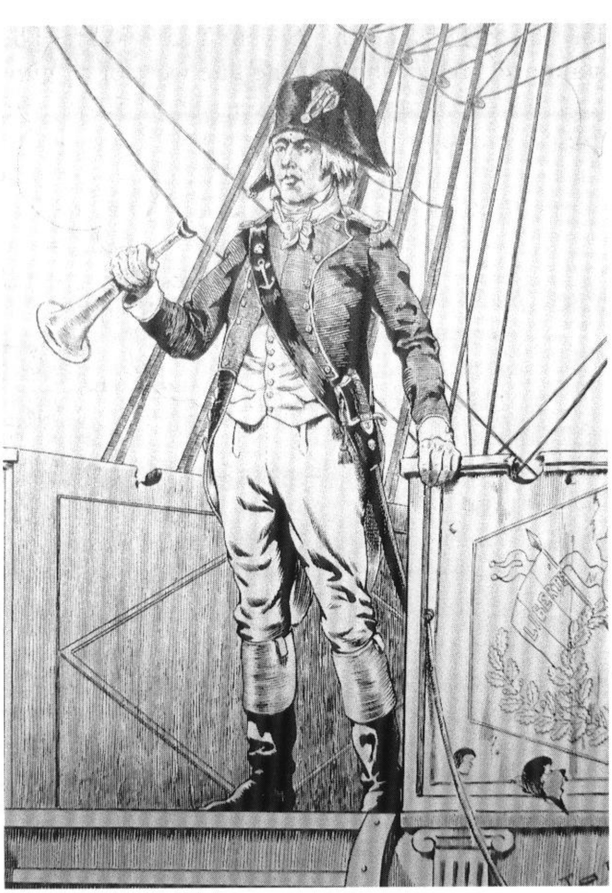
1795 *January*: Holland overrun—becomes the Batavian Republic ally of France. *12–14 March*: indecisive fighting off Genoa between French and British fleets. *23 June*: British defeat French squadron at Ile-de-Groix. *22 July*: Spain and Prussia cease hostilities with France.

1796 French squadron raids Grand Banks off Newfoundland. *October*: British evacuate Corsica. *November–December*: French expedition to Ireland fails to land.

1797 *14 February*: Spanish defeated by British at Cape St. Vincent. *22 February*: French troops land at Fishguard in Wales. *21–24 July*: British repulsed by Spanish at Tenerife, Canary Islands. *11 October*: Dutch fleet defeated by British at Camperdown.



The siege of Toulon, August to December 1793. The great French naval base on the Mediterranean was occupied in August by allied troops—mostly British—and Royalists. The port was slowly won back by the French Republican troops, although it was a disaster for the French fleet with 19 ships of the line and 14 frigates lost. A crucial element of the Republicans' success was the excellent artillery tactics displayed by Captain Napoleon Bonaparte, who was promoted General as a result. (Private collection)



Navy officer in 1793 by JOB, after a miniature in his collection. The uniform follows the 16 September 1792 regulations but has blue lapels with red piping in spite of the specific instruction that there were to be 'no lapels'. JOB also showed red cuffs, but this is not specified in the regulation. (Private collection)

1798 *19 May*: French fleet bearing Napoleon and his army sail for Egypt. *11 June*: takes Malta. *2 July*: captures Alexandria. *1 August*: British destroy French fleet on the Nile (Abukir Bay). *October*: French fleet gets to Ireland and lands a few troops but is driven back.

1799 *18 May*: French squadron defeated at Cape Carmel (Israel). *August*: Anglo-Russian expedition to the Netherlands captures part of the Dutch fleet but is forced to withdraw by Franco-Dutch forces. Coup of the 18–19 Brumaire (9–10 November); Napoleon takes power as First Consul. *15 November*: Minorca surrenders to British.

1800 *5 September*: Malta surrenders to British.

1801 *2 April*: Danish fleet raided by British at Copenhagen. *6 July*: French fleet fights off British at Algeciras. *3 and 5–16 August*: British raids fail off Boulogne. *August*: French in Egypt capitulate. *12 October*: cessation of hostilities between Britain and France.

1802 *27 March*: peace of Amiens with England. *26 April*: amnesty for royalist émigrés. *19 May*: Legion of Honour instituted. *2 August*: Bonaparte proclaimed Consul for life.

1803 *16 May*: Britain declares war on France.

1804 *18 May*: Bonaparte is proclaimed Emperor of the French 'Napoléon Ier'. Summer: small craft and troops are assembled at Boulogne.

1805 *22 July*: inconclusive engagement between British and Franco-Spanish fleet at Cape Finisterre. *21 October*: Franco-Spanish fleet completely defeated at Trafalgar. *12 November*: Napoleon enters Vienna.

1806 *6 February*: French squadron defeated by British off Santo Domingo. *May*: British declare blockade of European coast from the Elbe River to Brest. *12 July*: Confederation of the Rhine created. *27 October:* Napoleon enters Berlin. *21 November*: Napoleon issues the Berlin decree instituting the Continental blockade against Britain.

1807 *16 August–7 September*: British seize Danish fleet at Copenhagen. *31 August*: Danish Heligoland taken by British. *November*: British Order-in-Council prohibiting trade of neutral nations with French Empire unless they first call in Britain. *November–December*: Napoleon issues Milan decrees followed by Holland and Spain, stating that neutral vessels submitting to British procedures would be seized.

1808 French occupy Spain. *2 May*: insurrection in Madrid which soon spreads across Spain. Spanish colonies remain loyal to the Spanish Bourbons and become allies of the British. *14 June*: French squadron in Cadiz surrenders.

1809 *24 February*: British fought off at Sables-d'Olonne. *11–12 April*: successful British raid on Ile d'Aix. *28 July*: British land at Walcheren but evacuate at beginning of September.

1810 *February*: last French forces in West Indies surrender. *9 July*: Holland is amalgamated in to France. *23 August*: French squadron defeats British at Grand Port in Ile-de-

France. *6 December*: French squadron at Ile-de-France surrenders.

1811 *13 March*: Franco-Italian squadron defeated by British at Lissa in the Adriatic. *18 September*: last Dutch-French forces in East Indies surrender. *30 September*: British defeat a French flotilla off Boulogne.

1812 *19 June*: United States declare war on Great Britain. *24–26 June*: French Army crosses the Niemen River into Russia. *13 and 19 August*: first US Navy successes against British. *13 September*: Napoleon enters Moscow. *24 October*: French start the retreat. *25–29 November*: crossing of the Beresina.

1813 *May–October*: campaign in Germany. *16–19 October*: allies win at Leipzig. *21 December*: allied armies cross the Rhine.

1814 *February–March*: campaign of France. *31 March*: allies enter Paris. *6 April*: Napoleon abdicates and arrives at Elba on 4 May. *24 December*: Treaty of Ghent ends the war between Britain and the United States.

1815 *1 March*: Napoleon returns to France. *18 June*: battle of Waterloo. *22 June*: Napoleon abdicates and is sent to St. Helena, where he dies on 5 May 1821.

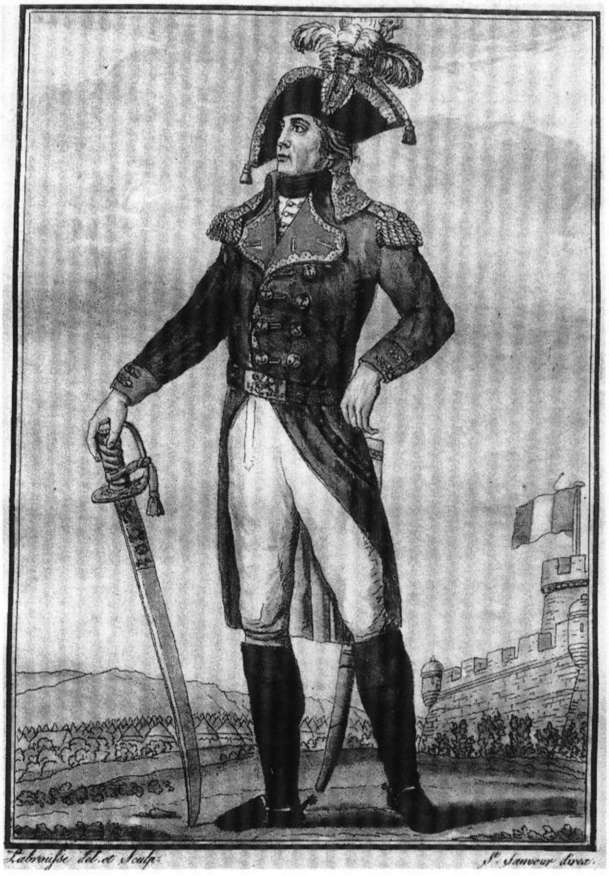
1840 *15 October*: ashes of Napoleon transferred on board the French warship *Belle-Poule* at St. Helena, arriving in Cherbourg on 29 December.

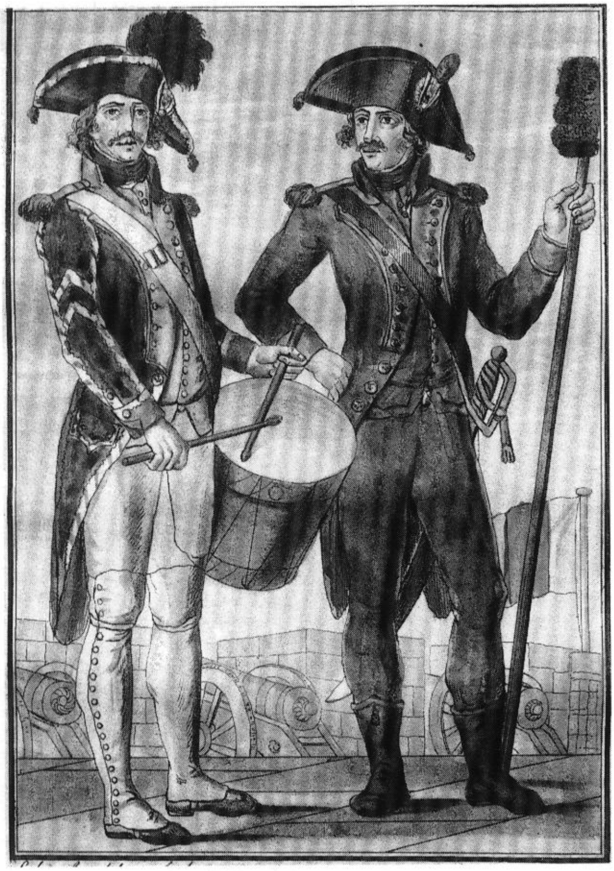
The French Navy in 1789

In 1789 France had the second strongest navy in the world. It had been rebuilt since the disasters of the Seven Years War. During the War of American Independence the French managed quite a few successes against a Royal Navy which could at best contain this new, rejuvenated, navy. French naval officers had become more talented and one, Admiral Suffren, proved to be a brilliant opponent in the Indian Ocean. Following the peace treaty of 1783, the French continued to make improvements to the navy that had brought them revenge for the defeats of the Seven Years War. The standard French ships of the line were of 74 guns and were of excellent design. The officers and crews were competent and the 'sea soldiers' were in the large *Corps royal de l'Infanterie de la Marine*, of 100 companies supported by three companies of *Bombardiers*—a force of over 10,000 men. Some reforms were made in 1782, but it was the general regulations of 1786 which reorganized the French navy in the most sweeping fashion since the days of Louis XIV. The whole navy was divided into nine fleets or squadrons with many measures made for greater efficiency.

Among the many reforms was a novel experiment: the marines and bombardier companies were abolished and instead a new *Corps royal des canonniers-matelots* (Royal corps of gunner-sailors) was created on 1 January 1786. It was an attempt,

Marine infantry *Chef de Brigade*, or Brigadier General, 1792–94, wearing a general's dark blue coat with red collar, cuffs, cuff flaps and lining, with gold buttons, lace and epaulettes and a gold laced bicorn with red, white and blue plumes. Note the spurs on the boots of this Marine. Print by Labrousse. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)


Labrousse del. et Sculp.
St. Sauveur direx.



Marine drummer and artilleryman, 1792–94. The drummer has dark blue coat and turnbacks with red collar, cuffs and epaulettes, white lapels (we have seen an example of this print with blue lapels), tricolour lace, black plume on the hat, white (?) metal buttons, white waistcoat, breeches, gaiters and drum belt. The drum case is blue with blue and red hoops. This appears to be a National Guard or Volunteer drummer attached to the navy as the Marine infantry uniform had dark blue cuffs and lapels, red cuff flaps and turnbacks, and black accoutrements. The gunner wears a dark blue uniform with red collar, cuffs, epaulettes, turnbacks and piping at the lapels and waistcoat and red edging to his short black gaiters, with black sabre belt, brass buttons, and a bicorn with red pom-pom (instead of the helmet). Print by Labrousse. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

certainly one of the earliest on record, to consolidate the duties of soldier and sailor. There were nine divisions (one division for each of the nine squadrons of the navy), each division having nine companies totalling 873 men. Naval sub-lieutenants provided the junior officers while officers from the *Corps royal de l'artillerie des colonies*[1] (Royal corps of colonial artillery) had more senior command. The *canonniers-matelots* were trained in gunnery, small arms as well as some aspects of the sailor's duty. The ratio of *canonniers-matelots* embarked on warships was to be seven for every ten guns, so that a 74-gun ship would have about 52 on board. Additional soldiers were to be provided by detachments of line regiments, a system that had worked well during the 1778–83 war.

The uniform of the *Corps royal des canonniers-matelots* followed the general colour scheme in the French navy, which was blue faced with red and trimmed with gold, but it had some unusual features (see Plate A). The men had a round hat with a white cockade and pom-pom of the division colour. The coatee was dark blue with red cuffs, lapels and turnbacks; the collar was of the divisional colour. A blue 'sailor style' sleeveless waistcoat was worn with long blue trousers tucked into a pair of short gaiters, which laced up on the outside. NCOs and First Class *canonniers-matelots* had red-fringed epaulettes; Second Class had the same, but with fringes on the left shoulder, and Third Class had no fringes. NCOs had various rank distinctions; for example, a Master Gunner had a gold lace edged red on each sleeve, while a Master Armourer had a yellow wool trefoil on the right shoulder instead of epaulettes. The *canonniers-matelots* were also issued a sailor's jacket, called a *paletot*, of blue linen trimmed with a collar of the divisional colour, linen trousers, and so on. Armament was the M.1779 Colonial troops' musket, with a ventral cartridge box holding nine rounds. NCOs and First Class *canonniers-matelots* also had hangers slung on a shoulder belt. Officers had a more standard uniform in the same colours as the men but with bicorn, long coat, breeches and boots. The distinctive divisional colours were the same as the squadron colours to which these sea-soldiers were attached: 1st: crimson; 2nd: white, 3rd: Saxon green; 4th: lemon yellow; 5th: sky blue; 6th: orange; 7th: violet; 8th: buff; 9th: pink.

The dress uniform of naval officers was dark blue with scarlet cuffs, lining, waistcoat and breeches, with an elaborate system of gold embroidery, epaulettes and lace according to rank. The coat collars were the colour of the squadron to which the officer belonged. The bicorn hat was laced with gold. Officers' undress uniform was dark blue lined with scarlet, the colour of the cuffs, with squadron-coloured collar, no, or some, gold lace depending on rank, white waistcoat and breeches. Sailors did not as yet have a fixed uniform, but their preferences tended toward round hats or wool caps, dark blue or striped jackets and trousers (see plate A).

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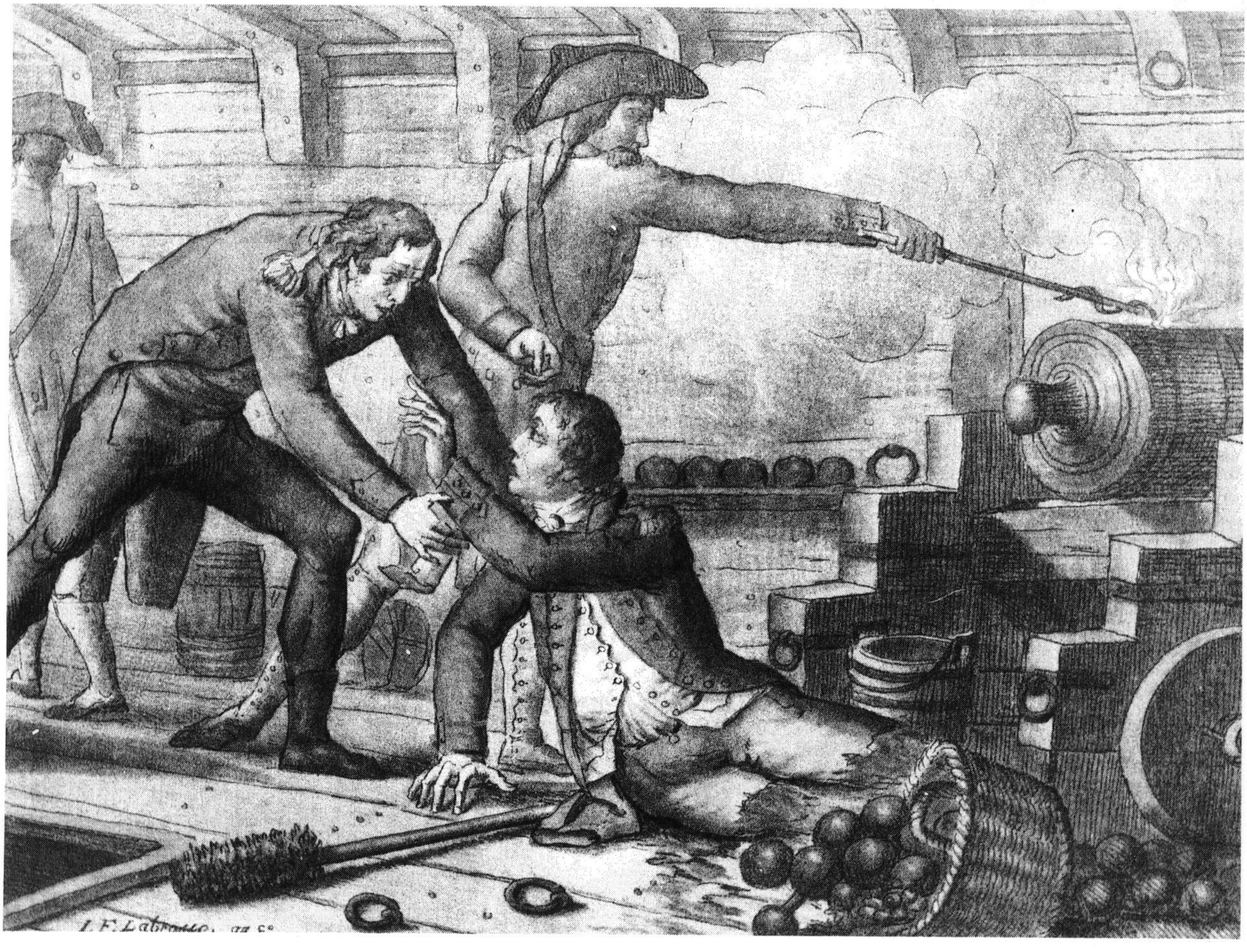
[1] See MAA No. 211 *Napoleon's Overseas Army*.

The way the French fleet was officered and manned was somewhat different to that of the British Royal Navy. In the 1780s the officer corps was filled almost exclusively by the sons of noble families. Indeed, to become an *Elève de la Marine* (the equivalent of a Midshipman in the Royal Navy) the young aspiring officer had to apply with a certified copy of his family genealogy to ensure that he had the required amount of blue blood. This system, which ensured officer positions for the *noblesse*, nevertheless produced good officers since they were highly trained. Its evil lay in the unfairness to qualified men condemned to the lower deck or the merchant marine because they were not of noble blood. This unfairness was as true in the corps of *canonniers-matelots* as it was in the land army. For talented and bright NCOs of the sea or land armies there was almost no hope of reaching officer rank, so bitterness increased with the years.

Sea-soldiers were recruited the same way as other soldiers, with recruiting sergeants hovering about taverns in ports and in the area of the Pont Neuf in Paris, making promises of glory and fortune on the high seas. Sailors for their part were not 'pressed' into service but were conscripted by an elaborate system existing since the days of Louis XIV, which provided that all sailors were to be registered by a Commissary of the naval *Classes*. Under the *Classes* system, every French sailor had to serve on a warship every two or three cruises—failure to report could mean severe penalties

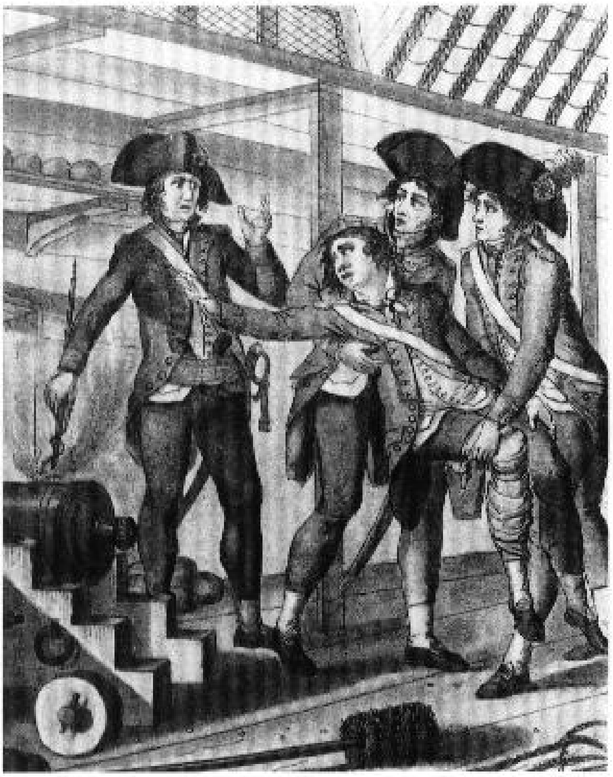


François Martin, a Marine Artillery gunner on board *Le Northumberland*, had his legs shot away during the battle of the 'Glorious 1st of June' 1794, but refused to be taken away until the fight was over. He survived, was admitted to the Invalids and decorated for his outstanding bravery. Hats are shown in this print by Labrousse but another print depicting the same event shows the crested helmet. Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

against relatives and neighbours. In general this system was less brutal than the British 'press gangs', and the application of discipline in the French navy was more humane than in the British forces.

In 1789 the French navy had three main military seaports: Brest and Rochefort on the Atlantic, and Toulon on the Mediterranean. These ports were the headquarters for senior commanders, and the bases for most Marine units. They had large shipyards for the construction and refitting of warships, as well as related industries, and were the homes of thousands of *ouvriers*, the shipyard workers. There was a powerful corps of administrative and techinical officers such as commissaries, shipbuilding engineers, and so on. They were the *officiers de plume*—officers of the pen—as opposed to the *officiers d'épée*—officers of the sword—the sea-faring naval officers who had little regard and much disdain for the paper pushers. There were smaller bases in France such as Lorient, and in the colonies, such as Port-Louis in Ile-de-France, which were humbler versions of the three great ports, all with the same military and administrative structure.

Bélard, volunteer in the Marine Artillery on board *La Montagne*, was wounded at the battle of the 1st of June 1794 and carried away shouting 'they [the British] want this ship but they will not get it'. Note the lack of gaiters and the non-regulation white waistcoats. Print by Labrousse. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)



Revolution

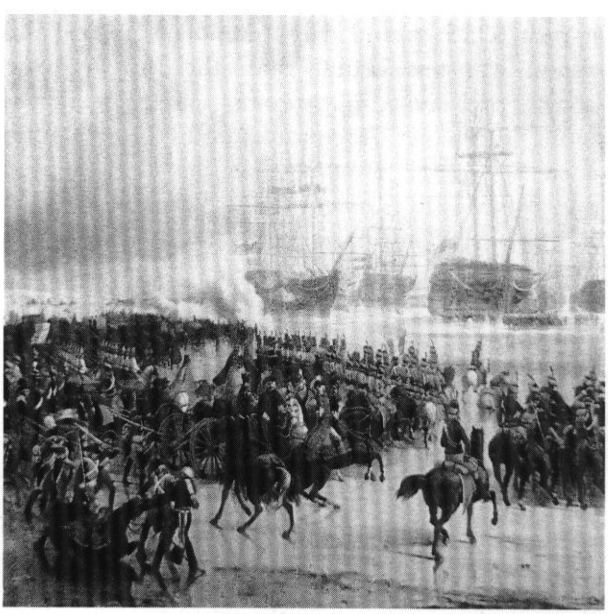
Even before the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789, all was not well in the French navy. The serious economic crises which the country faced during the late 1780s brought budget reductions that displeased the officer corps. Increasing administrative powers went to the *officiers de plume* in an attempt by the government to control budgets more effectively. This did nothing to improve morale in the lower decks while many *ouvriers* in the ports were thrown out of work as the construction of warships slowed down. In Toulon, for example, many salaried employees were owed arrears in pay, while merchants were not fully paid for material sold to the navy. This affected the economic and social life of the whole city and, on 23 March 1789, great numbers of rioters took to the streets. The garrison and the *canonniers-matelots* were put on alert, but the authorities managed to contain the crisis by various means, including distributing bread from the bakeries of the naval arsenal to the *ouvriers*. A relative calm returned after a few days. The riots were not a good omen, as the naval commandant observed, for if such an event was possible in a city with 4,000 soldiers, what of places which had no troops?

By July 1789, the unrest in France had turned into that great event of modern history: the French Revolution. The navy was to be one of its major casualties. Disturbances spread to Brest and Rochefort as the sense of order gradually collapsed in the great military ports. Scuffles between officers and men concerning the adoption of the tricolour cockade in July and August developed into full-scale mutinies. The *ouvriers*, who felt they had nothing to lose, formed National Guard units. For the soldiers, the confrontation came during a riot in Toulon on 1 December. The sea-soldiers of the *Corps royal des canonniers-matelots* refused to fire on the populace, and mutinied. The admiral commanding Toulon, Count d'Albert de Rions, was chased out of town and, when he came to take command of the squadron in Brest in 1790, the sailors and soldiers mutinied there as well. Was de Rions such a bad officer? On the contrary. He had distinguished himself during the American war, was a friend and disciple of the great Admiral Suffren and one of the best minds in the navy. But he had the misfortune to command at the wrong time.

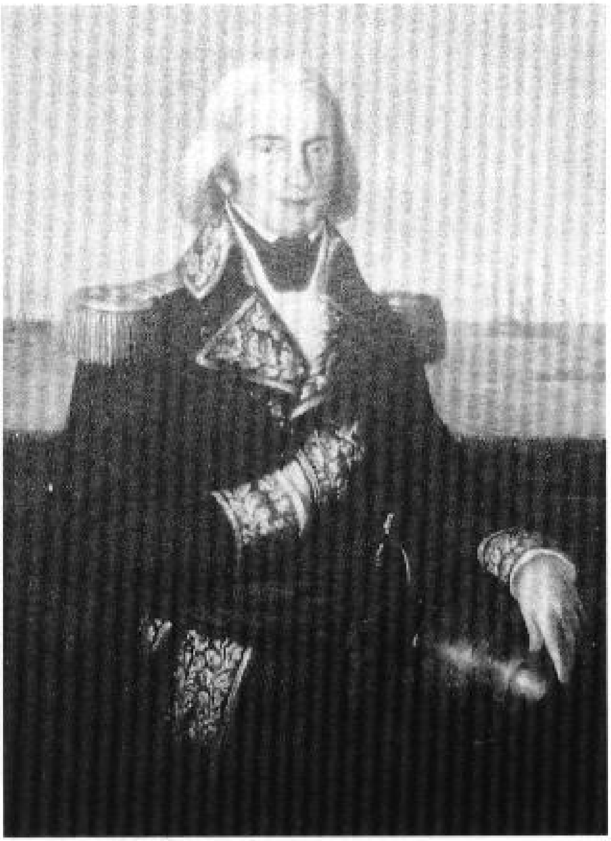
This is just one example of many such events which, in a very few years, ruined what had been one of the world's most powerful and modern navies. Mutinies occurred on board several ships in colonial stations. The talented and noble officer corps remained largely loyal to the King and hostile to the ideas of the Revolution, so many officers chose to leave and become *émigrés*. A serious shortage of qualified officers soon became apparent and, in April 1791, a decree reorganized the navy. The nine squadrons were abolished. A new officer corps was created by commissioning petty officers and merchant marine officers as well as by having an unlimited number of midshipmen and 'Auxiliary Ensigns'. Some of the reforms of the 1791 decree were fair and meant to redress the abuses of the 'ancien régime'. Unfortunately they came at a time of revolution rather than of evolution. For those pre-1789 officers who stayed on the situation grew even worse. In September 1792 several such officers were killed by a mob in Toulon, their bodies hung on lamp-posts. Nor was defection limited only to crews against their officers. In January 1793 part of the French Windward Islands squadron—four warships, officers and men—went to Spanish Trinidad to remain loyal to the Bourbon kings rather than embrace the cause of the Republic. Thus, as France was about to go to war with much of Europe, its once-superb navy lay prostrate and neglected. Its new officer corps, mostly men from the lower deck and the merchant marine, were excellent sailors but did not have the training to confront the military and tactical problems of naval strategy.

Marine Regiments

The *Corps royal des canonniers-matelots* was disbanded on 14 June 1792. On the same day four regiments of Marine infantry and two regiments of Marine artillery were decreed to be raised, which signalled the end of the 'soldier-sailor' experiment. Personnel from the *canonniers-matelots* and the colonial artillery were to be incorporated into the new organisation. Each regiment had two battalions of eight companies, each having 87 men and three officers, for a total of 2,880 officers and men plus staff. The establishment strength was obviously never reached since some of the colonial artillery corps continued to exist until absorbed into the army as the 8th Artillery Regiment in 1793. The uniform of the Marine artillery regiments was dark blue coat, lapels, waistcoat and breeches with red collar, cuffs, epaulettes and turnbacks and red piping edging the lapels, waistcoat and short gaiters. Buttons were brass. Headdress was a bicorn and/or a 'Tarleton'-type crested helmet (see plate B). Marine gunners participated in several actions, but some in Toulon rallied to the Royalist cause following the occupation of that port by the British in August 1793. During the ensuing siege by French republican forces, there were Marine artillerymen on both sides; the gunners of the republic were commanded by a young army artillery officer called Napoleon Bonaparte. The British, had to evacuate Toulon in



The capture of the ice-bound Dutch fleet on 21 January 1795 by a squadron of the French 8th Hussars and a company of the 3rd Tirailleurs. It was probably a unique victory in military history: of cavalry capturing ships of the line. In a daring bluff the French commander, General Lahure, announced that his force was part of a larger army corps and demanded surrender, and the Dutch Admiral complied. (Private collection)



Vice-Admiral François-Paul Brueys in 1797 wearing the full dress uniform of senior naval officers. From 1792 it was ordered to be similar to that of general officers in the army except for buttons stamped with an anchor design. It consisted of a dark blue coat with dark blue lapels, scarlet collar and cuffs, gold buttons and embroidery. (Private collection)

December, but many French warships were lost. The Toulon arsenal was set on fire by the retreating British but the 'Royalist' Marine gunners extinguished the flames, an action which saved the lives of many of them when they surrendered to the victorious republican forces. In Brest the Revolutionary Tribunal sent most Marine artillerymen to serve as infantry against the royalists in Vendée, replacing them on ships with 'National Volunteers' who knew nothing of artillery—an outstanding example of mismanagement.

The four Marine infantry regiments each had an establishment of two battalions of nine companies of 80 men each, including one of Grenadiers. This establishment of 1,440 men may have been augmented, since we find the 4th Regiment with 1,504 men at sea out of a total of 2,089 in early 1794. The uniform was a dark blue coat and breeches with dark blue lapels, cuffs and shoulder straps piped with red; red waistcoat, collar, cuff flap and turnback piped with white; the turnbacks also had white anchors. Hats were bicorns with red pom-pom or a fatigue cap. White or black gaiters were worn with black accoutrements and a cartridge box with a brass anchor badge; buttons were also brass. There were, however, difficulties in the issue of the clothing and equipment to some of the men of the Marine units.

The soldiers serving on board a fleet could be of a mixed background. A good example was the French fleet in New York during the summer and autumn of 1793. It had 'on board ... about 2,000 regular troops, doing duty as marines'. Citizen Genet, the French ambassador to the United States, was anxious for the fleet to sail to invade Canada and was busy raising a corps composed of Irishmen with 'the remainder a set of villains who disclaimed allegiance to the United States', according to British spies. Some field carriages for brass six- and nine-pounders were also made in New York and taken on board. Eighty soldiers drafted from the various ships formed a troop of dragoons which were reported well equipped and exercised. But most soldiers, spies reported, were 'a very motley crew—miserably dressed. Their uniforms, like Joseph's coat of many colours, and in every particular resembling the late rebel army—many old men, and a great many boys among them.' General Galbaud, who was to lead this 'motley crew' of line infantry and Marines to Canada, deserted instead and surrendered to the British authorities in Montreal during October 1793. The French fleet went back to France and Ambassador Genet's activities were finally disavowed. The miserable state of the French fleet, its officers and its soldiers, revealed the damage done by a gross lack of discipline, leadership and supplies.

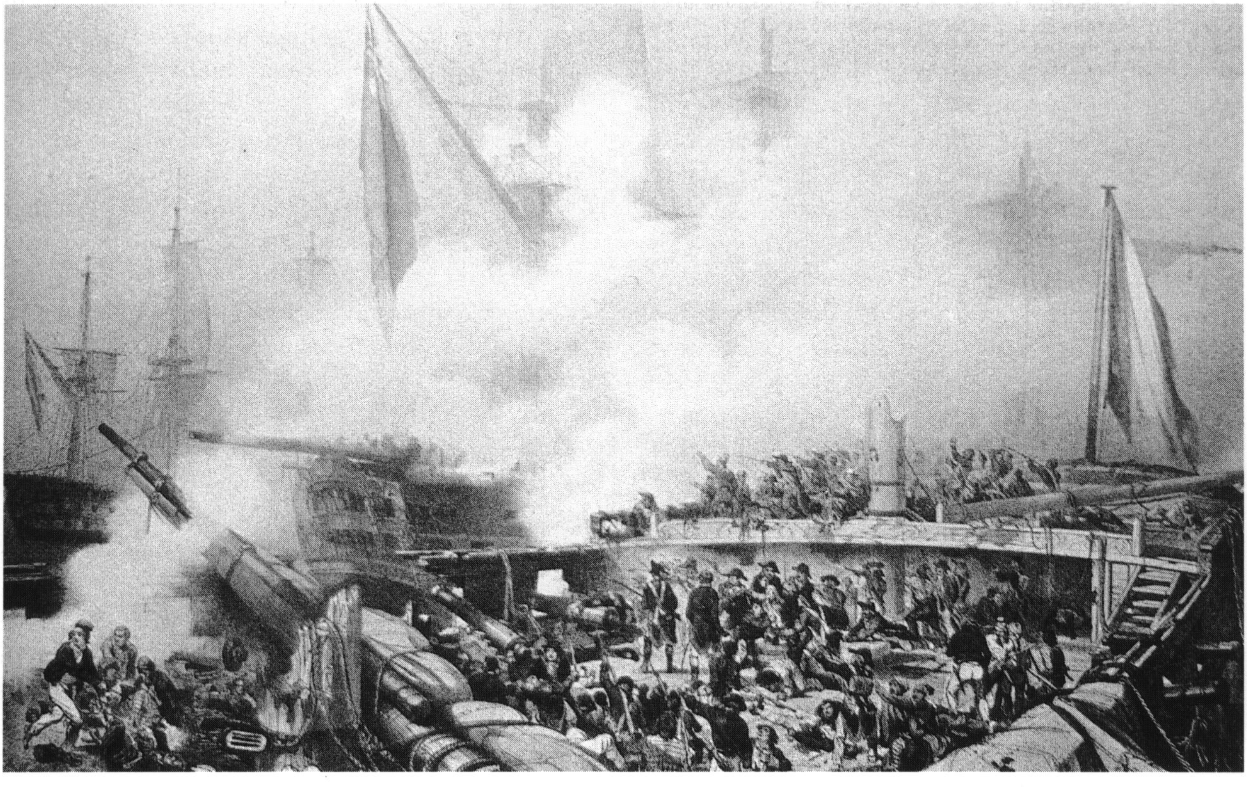
By a decree of 28 January 1794, the Marine artillery and infantry regiments were abolished and absorbed into battalions of National Volunteers, which were to provide the sea-soldiers for the ships of the Republic. This measure was applied gradually during 1794 but appears to have achieved little beyond a certain amount of chaos as infantrymen who had never been to sea were suddenly told to be naval gunners, while the sea-soldiers resented the abolition of their corps.

Marine Artillery Demi-Brigades

On 25 October 1795 the government recognized its mistake and decreed the formation of a corps of Marine Artillery of seven Demi-Brigades, each having three battalions of nine companies, each company having 120 men. This gave the new corps a maximum establishment of over 22,000, not counting the officers. There were three Demi-Brigades based in Brest, one at Lorient, one at Rochefort and two at Toulon. The uniform of the seven Demi-Brigades was a dark blue coat, lapels, cuffs, turnbacks, waistcoat and breeches; red collar piped white, red cuff flap, red piping edging the lapels, cuffs and turnbacks; yellow metal buttons; bicorn hat; black accoutrements; musket and bayonet. Epaulettes and rank distinctions were the same as in the land artillery. A hanger was worn only by NCOs and First Class gunners. There was also a dark blue *paletot*, linen pantaloons and an undress cap for fatigue duties and 'all artillery and infantry drills' (see plate C). Officers had a similar uniform but with gilded buttons and a gilded gorget when on duty; they wore boots instead of gaiters, and were armed with a sword carried on a shoulder-belt.

There were also three companies of *ouvriers* of the marine artillery and four squads of *Apprentis-canonniers* (apprentice gunners) mentioned in the 1795 decree, but few details were given. The organisation of the *Apprentis-canonniers* was further defined in a decree of 14 May 1797, with each squad having 152 men, who were trained by NCOs of the Marine Artillery Demi-Brigades. The objectve was to provide trained gunners for the fleet. The *Apprentis-canonniers* were given a blue *paletot* piped with scarlet with a red fall collar piped white; blue waistcoat and breeches; yellow metal buttons; black leather cap with a brass badge stamped to the arms of the Republic; grey undress *paletot* and long trousers. Their instructors, or *maîtres*, were also given a distinctive uniform: dark blue coat and turnbacks, no lapels, red cuffs and collar, brass Marine Artillery buttons; dark blue waistcoat and breeches; plain bicorn hat with a yellow cockade loop. The senior *maître-canonniers*

The devastated deck of the 86-gun ship *Tonnant* at Abukir on 1 August 1798. Its Captain, Dupetit-Thouars, had both legs shot off but had himself set in a barrel to continue the combat until he finally passed away and his ship beached. Admiral Brueys was mortally wounded but also remained on the deck of his 124-gun flagship *L'Orient*, which blew up at 10 p.m. Admiral Nelson's brilliant tactics spelt disaster for the French fleet, despite its heroism, and trapped Napoleon's army in Egypt. (Private collection)

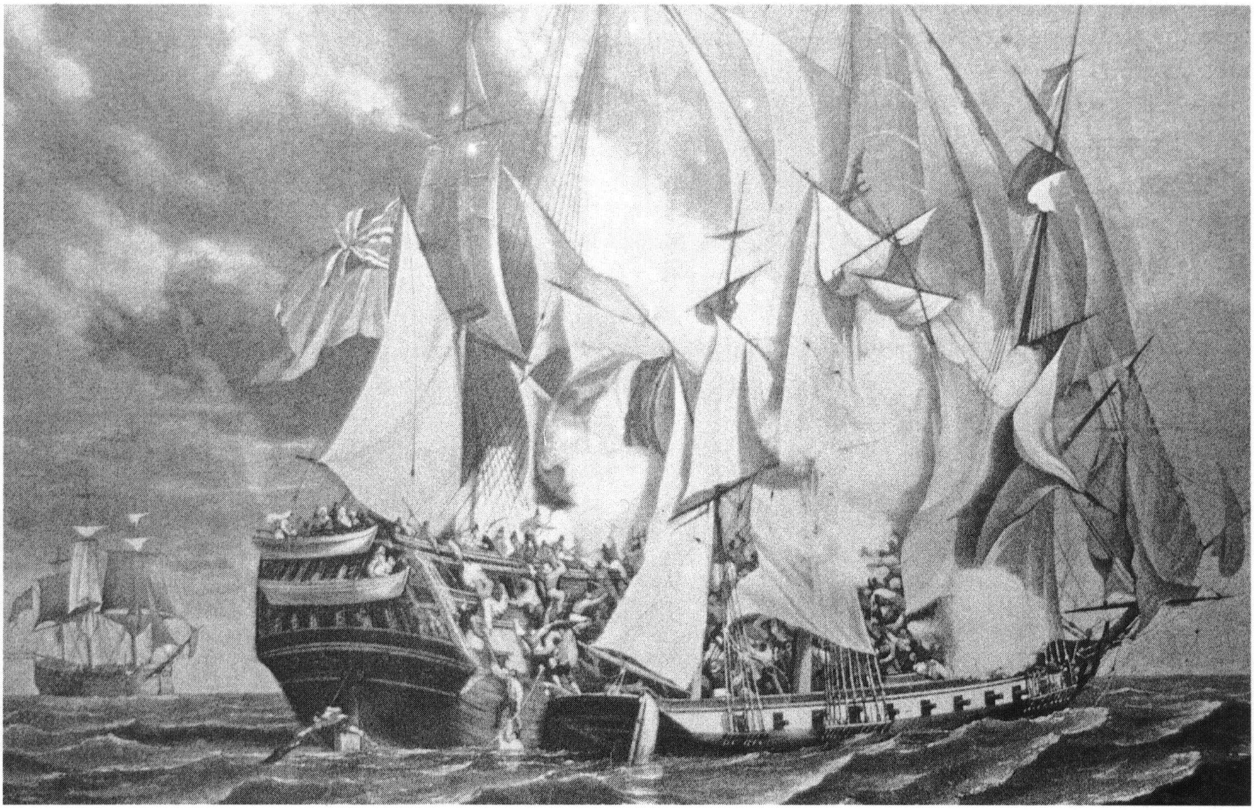


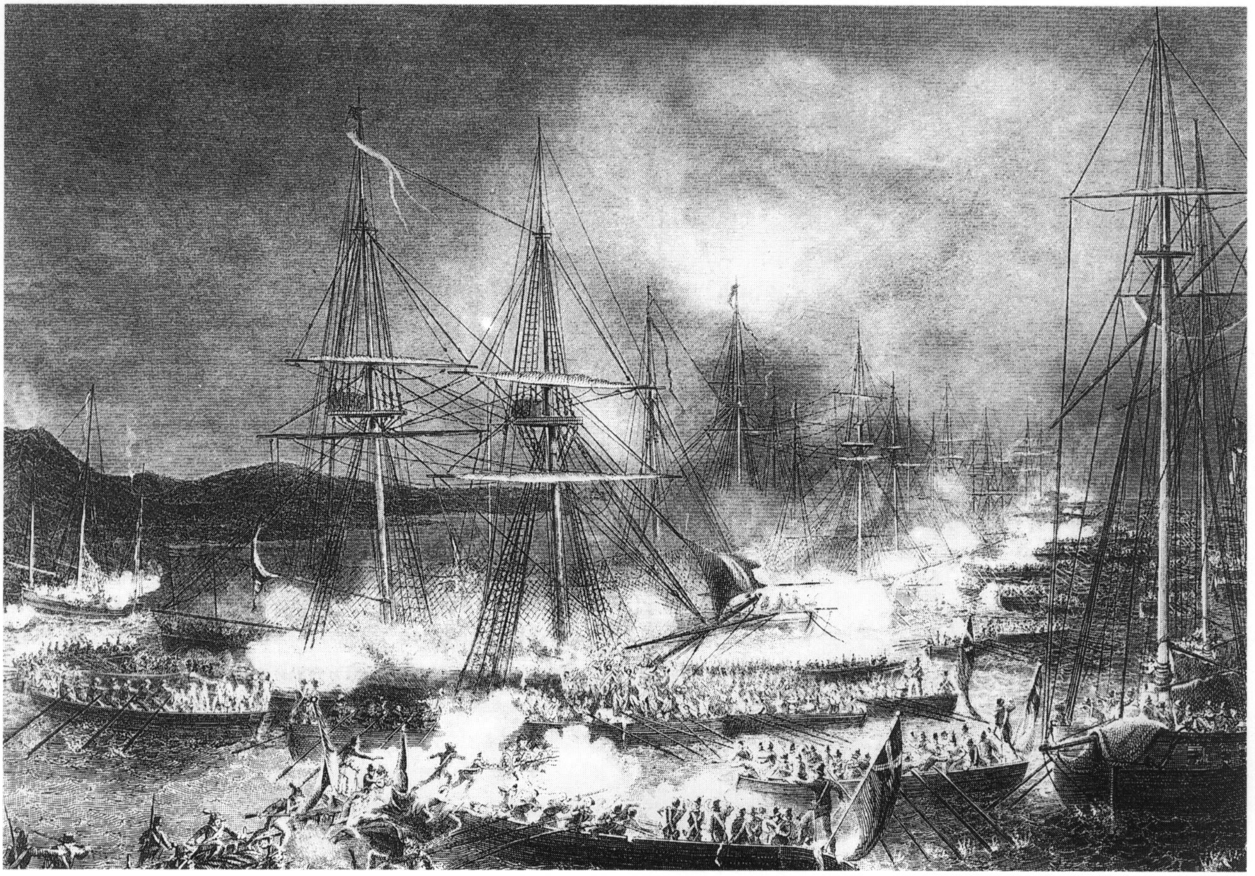
had two gold laces on the collar while the *maître-canonniers* had one. The *second-maîtres* had one gold lace on the cuff while the *aide-canonnier* had a lace of yellow silk on the collar. The *maître-artificier* had the above uniform but with sky blue collar, cuffs and lapels 'for distinction'. All instructors were armed with a sabre, which was carried in a shoulder-belt.

There was no Marine infantry, only Marine artillery after the 1795 organisation. The Marine artillerymen were also to act as the ship's 'garrison', that is to say infantry, and were equipped for the task. On shore they were also to garrison the ports and coast fortifications. How this worked out in practice during this chaotic period is certainly open to debate and further research. That the full establishment was ever reached seems very doubtful. There was also an acute shortage of sailors so that, during the unlucky expedition to Ireland in December 1796, the Marine artillerymen made up half of the crews on ships which would probably have been lost to heavy seas without their assistance. They were detached on all warships and saw much action against their British foes up to the cessation of hostilities in the later part of 1801.

Not all were on ships or in seaports. Some were with the *Légion Nautique* formed in Egypt after the defeat at Abukir in 1798 (see plate C). Others were detached from sea duties, formed into 16 companies of 'Grenadiers', and sent to Italy in 1801. Others took part in General Leclerc's 1802 expedition in Saint-Domingue and saw action against the troops of Toussaint L'Ouverture in February and March. They were later formed into a battalion to serve on the island and most perished there from yellow fever during the latter part of 1802. In June 1802 a detachment of Marine artillery was formed as part of the troops leaving for Martinique. In July another Marine artillery detachment was formed for General Richepanse's expedition to Guadeloupe.

The daring capture by boarding of the Honourable East India Company's 38-gun ship *Kent*. Its 437 men, including troops, were captured by the 18-gun corsair *La Confiance*, which was commanded by Robert Surcouf with 120 sailors. He was the most outstanding and successful French privateer of the Napoleonic era, one of many who infested British trade routes and caused considerable losses, often forcing ships to sail in escorted convoys. Over 5,500 British ships were captured by French privateers from 1793 to 1801 and over 5,300 from 1803 to 1814. Even after the capture of Ile-de-France and Guadeloupe in 1810, French privateers could still be found using such places as Colombia for bases. Print after the painting by Louis Garneray, who was one of Surcouf's officers. (Private collection)



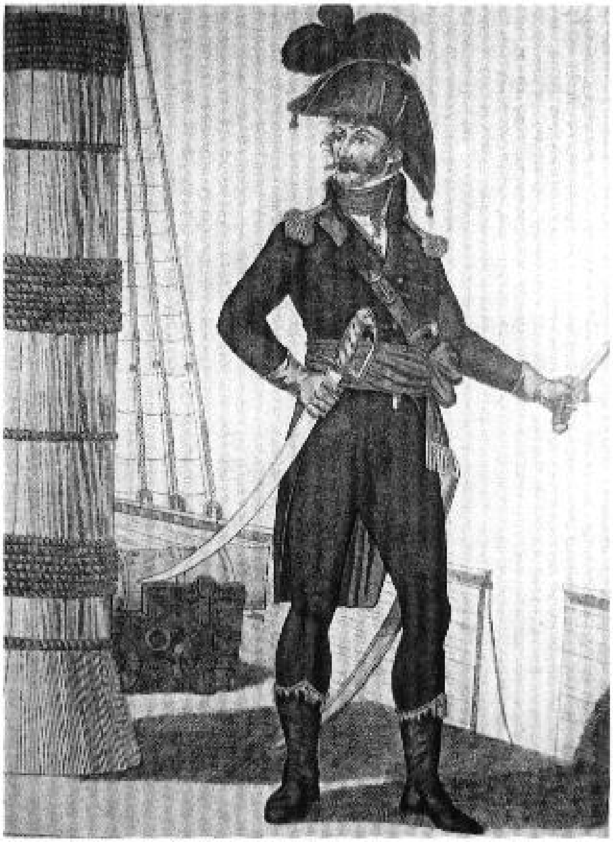


Battle near Boulogne during the night of 15 to 16 August 1801 between the French *Flotille* and the British. It proved to be a French naval success. The Royal Navy's attack was repulsed with heavy British casualties—some five hundred were found washed up on the beach on the morning of the 16th—against 34 French killed. (National Library of Canada)

Marine Artillery Regiments

On 5 May 1803 the seven Demi-Brigades were abolished and transformed into four regiments. The 1st and 2nd had four battalions each (the 2nd had a fifth battalion from June 1805) while the 3rd and 4th had two battalions each. There were six companies of 200 men per battalion so that the maximum establishment was 14,400 men. This was a considerable reduction over the previous establishment but probably represented the actual strength of the corps. The Marine artillery also had four companies of *ouvriers*, each of 150 men; the four were augmented by a fifth company for the service of Antwerp and Boulogne on 7 May 1805 and a sixth company for Genoa on 11 June 1805. There were also four companies of *Apprentis-canonniers*, each of 137 men; three more were raised on 6 October 1803 but one was disbanded in 1805. On 9 November 1804 the title *Corps impérial de l'Artillerie de la Marine* was granted. The stations of the regiments in 1805 were as follows: 1st Regt: all four Battalions. at Brest; 2nd Regt: 1st Bn at Genoa, 2nd and 4th Bns. at Brest, 3rd and 5th Bns. at Toulon; 3rd Regt: Rochefort; 4th Regt: Lorient. On 29 February 1812 the establishment of each company was raised to 250, which made the corps some 19,500 strong. The regiments were distributed as follows: 1st Regt: all in Brest; 2nd Regt: one Bn. in Genoa, two Bns. at Toulon, one Bn. at Lorient, one Bn. at Rochefort; 3rd Regt: Cherbourg; 4th Regt: Antwerp.

The first years of the corps were made painful by the naval defeats at Trafalgar in 1805 and Santo Domingo in 1806, but the bravery of these sea-soldiers was never in doubt and they carried on, sometimes cheered by a small victory for instance, Marine artilleryman Lt. Heudes receiving the Legion of Honour for his outstanding conduct during the *Piémontaise*'s capture of the *Warren Hastings* in the Indian Ocean on 21 June 1806. There were also small detachments of Marine



Captain Gourdon, commandant of the *Flotille* at Le Havre, according to a *c.* 1803 print. His uniform—basically after the decree of 25 August 1800—is a dark blue coat with red stand and fall collar and lining, gold buttons, epaulettes and anchor on the black sword belt, red sash with gold fringes, dark blue pantaloons, half boots trimmed with gold and black bicorn laced gold with black plumes at each side of a red plume. (Private collection)

artillery in Guadeloupe and a company in Santo Domingo (the present Dominican Republic) from 1806 to 1808. A battalion was with Marshal Junot's army in Portugal from November 1807 to November 1808. A provisional battalion of Marine artillery was stationed at Belle-Isle from 1809 to 1811; another sent to Flushing in 1811. A detachment of three officers and 120 men served in Spain as land artillery from 1811 to 1814. Officers of the Marine artillery were detached to various duties—usually to battalions of sailors or *ouvriers* with the *Grande Armée* in Austria during 1809, Spain from 1810 and Russia in 1812—but a few were also sent to Java in the Dutch East Indies during 1810.

Following the loss of most of his army in the snows of Russia, Napoleon sought to raise a new *Grande Armée*, and his attention turned to the veteran troops of the four regiments of Marine artillery. On 24 January 1813 they were transferred from the Marine Department to the War Department and reorganised during February, but they retained the suffix title *de la Marine*. The 1st Regiment was to have eight battalions of six companies each, with an establishment of 137 men and three officers per company. The 2nd Regiment had ten battalions the 3rd and 4th four battalions each. Six battalions of the best gunners remained in the ports. Twenty battalions, representing an actual fighting strength of 9,640 men, marched into Germany in March and formed the major part of Marshal Marmont's 6th Army Corps. After some initial adjustments for troops which had been used to a sedentary artillery service, the 'Marine Division' became an outstanding infantry formation. At Lützen (2 May), it held the right of the army, formed in squares, and repulsed seven enemy cavalry charges, causing heavy casualties, particularly to the Prussian Guard Hussars. Marching towards the East, Marmont's corps then repulsed a Russian force at Bautzen (20 May). Thereafter, some offficers and 500 men of the Marine artillery were transferred to the Imperial Guard Artillery, while four more battalions came from France to reinforce Marmont's corps, leaving only a battalion in Brest and another in Toulon. The corps took part in the battle of Dresden (26 August) and campaigned in Bohemia. Facing large allied armies, the French retreated until they reached Leipzig where a three-day battle was fought (16–18 October). The French had to retreat, but the Marine artillery of the 6th Corps won outstanding praise from Marshal Marmont for their 'heroic conduct' under withering fire. Retreating towards the West, the Corps also fought at Hanau (30 October). As the 1813 campaign ended, the losses to the four regiments spoke of their outstanding bravery. Even allowing for deserters, which appear to have been few in the Marine artillery, and about 1,700 men detached to other corps, the corps reported 2,412 killed, 7,291 wounded or sick and 2,319 prisoners or unaccounted for. Thus, of 17,338 men sent to the units, only 3,661 remained present and fit for duty.

They were reorganised on 7 November as follows: 1st Regt.: two Bns., 557 men; 2nd Regt.

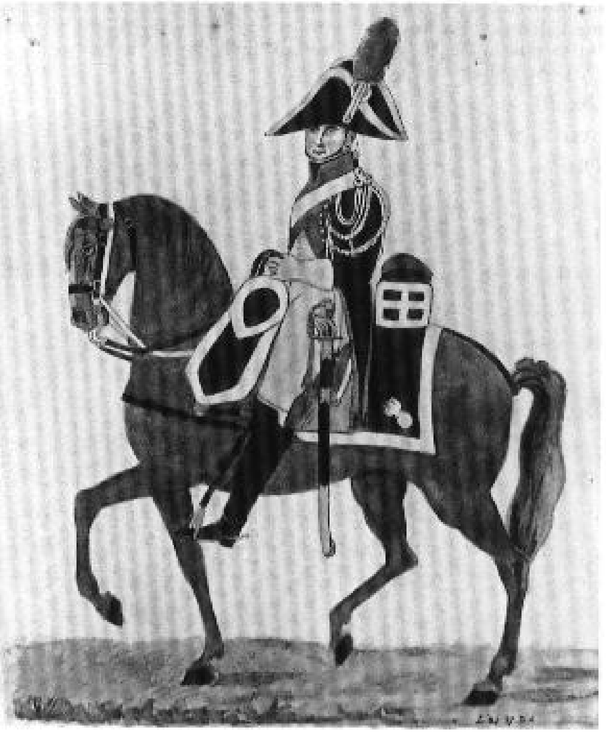
four Bns., 1,897 men; 3rd Regt., three Bns, 632 men; 4th Regt., three. Bns., 575 men. The 6th Army Corps took part in many engagements in the 1814 campaign in France, fighting off cavalry charges while retreating, retaking Meaux (27 February) and fighting against all odds at the battle for Paris (30 March). After Napoleon's abdication, the four regiments were sent to Normandy, where they mustered. Out of over 18,000 officers and men, sent in 1813, only 695 were left on 2 May 1814.

With the advent of the royal government came another reorganisation for the Marine artillerymen, who were, from 1 July 1814, divided into three regiments and named *Corps royal des canonniers de la Marine*. During the Hundred Days, the corps rallied to the Emperor. A couple of battalions were sent to Paris and another to Lyon, but the corps saw no action. The return of Louis XVIII led to a further reorganisation in 1816, when the gunners were renamed *Corps royal d'artillerie de la marine*. Thus passed away one of the finest yet least-known corps of Napoleon's *Grande Armée*.

Uniforms

The dress of the Marine artillerymen decreed in 1803 was a dark blue coat with dark blue cuffs, lapels and turnbacks piped with scarlet; red collar piped white and red cuff flap; brass buttons; dark blue waistcoat and breeches; black gaiters. First Class gunners had two red epaulettes with fringes, Second Class gunners had red shoulder straps and *Aspirans* gunners had dark blue shoulder straps piped red. NCOs and gunners who were master gunners had a gold lace edging the collar. The accoutrements were white instead of black as previously but the hanger was only worn by NCOs and First Class gunners, as before. For undress, a dark blue *paletot* and linen pantaloons were worn. The musket was the same model as that of the Army artillery and had brass furnishings. A bicorn hat with a yellow cockade loop and red pom-pom was worn until 1807, when it was replaced by a black shako with red cords and pom-pom (red plume for dress occasions) and brass plate. Red bands at the top and base of the shako were probably worn until *c.* 1810, when they became black, as in the Army artillery (see plate E). The companies of *ouvriers* of the artillery had the same uniform as the artillerymen except for scarlet lapels. The *Apprentis-canonniers* had a plain blue *paletot* and a leather cap with a brass plate bearing 'the attributes of the artillery'. During the 1813 and 1814 campaigns the four artillery regiments wore dark blue greatcoats with blue pantaloons and black shako covers. Because of this dress, and their remarkable steadfastness in battle, they were sometimes mistaken by the enemy for the Imperial Old Guard (see plate H).

Officers had the same uniform as above but with gilded buttons, gorget, sword, and knee boots with yellow-buff turndown. However, there were deviations. The colonel of the 1st Regiment improved on the officer's uniform in 1809 by adding gold grenades at the collar, a wide white swordbelt with a large gold plate and high black 'Horse Guard'-type boots with silver spurs (see plate E). An officer of the 2nd spoke approvingly of his 'mameluck' pantaloons with a very wide gold lace, which he wore in 1813.

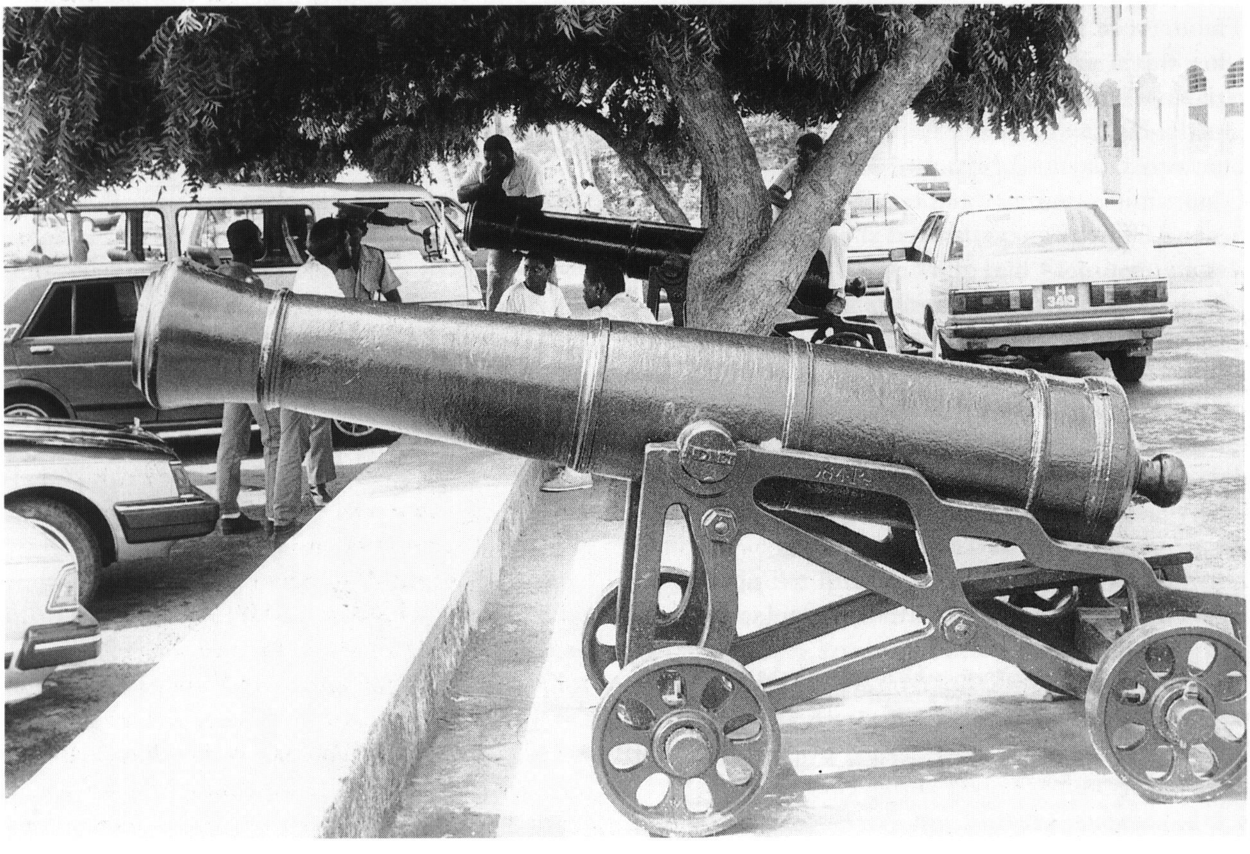


The *Gendarmerie maritime*, which policed the ports and naval prefectures, wore a bicorn laced white with red plume; dark blue coat with red collar, cuffs, lapels and turnbacks; white aiguillettes; buff waistcoat and breeches and buff belts edged white. This was the same uniform as the *Gendarmerie nationale* except for the white metal buttons, which were stamped with an anchor and 'Gendarmerie maritime'. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

Reforms in the Navy

Napoleon has often been considered to misunderstand the navy. Being an artillery officer, he was given to precise calculations and never quite accepted that the wind was more important to ships than his orders. His impatience at his fleet at Boulogne is famous. Much less known but just as important were his more pragmatic measures towards the fleet taken during 1800–1801. In a general reform, a mass of individuals notable for their 'crass ignorance' were kicked out of the navy and the ranks opened to anyone with decent qualifications, including former officers of the old *Marine royale* as well as educated and talented young men. To improve discipline, the old pre-1789 general regulations were brought back into force and new ones drafted, bringing back order and submission to central authority. The concept of having, besides the larger warships, armed small craft in 'flotillas' also evolved at this time and saw some success against the British channel fleet in August 1801, frustrating Admiral Nelson himself. Admiral Denis Decrès, an able administrator but unfortunately more of a courtier than a naval strategist, was made Minister of Marine in 1801, a portfolio he held until the final exile of the Emperor in 1815. Great efforts and vast sums of money were allotted to the navy by the First Consul. The navy had 83 ships of the line in 1792 but only 46 ten years later, while the number of frigates had gone from 74 to 37. To build new ships large military seaports and shipyards were set up at Cherbourg and Antwerp—the latter especially worried William Pitt, who felt it was 'a pistol aimed at the head of England'. For the first time in over a decade the navy emerged from chaos, thanks to Napoleon's measures.

However, a good navy takes many years to build, not only ships, but an ample reserve of skilled officers and sailors. At first, Napoleon



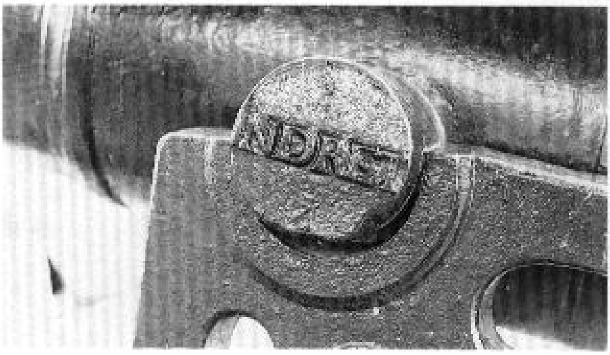
French naval iron 18-pdr. cannon of the 1779 model. Unlike Britain, France had its own specifications and models for naval ordnance. This particular cannon was cast in 1786, and probably became a British prize during the Napoleonic wars. It was left at Montserrat in the British West Indies, along with two others of the same model. Rarely found in such excellent condition, these guns are in Plymouth, Montserrat, mounted on British iron carriages. (Author)

wrongly presumed that uniting the fleets of Spain and Holland to that of France would automatically produce a great fleet—like gathering contingents for the *Grande Armée*. Skilled manpower was always a problem for the fleet, which Napoleon tackled with increasingly military measures. A first experiment had been the formation of the *Légion Nautique* during the campaign in Egypt. Following the defeat of the French fleet at Abukir, nearly 2,500 sailors and Marine artillerymen stranded in Alexandria were used to form the new legion during October and November 1798. Issued with arms and uniforms, the new legion had eight companies of Fusiliers, one of Grenadiers and sections of artillery and pioneers. General Bonaparte noted that the sailors could be trained and led quite efficiently in a militarized organisation. He did not forget. The *Légion Nautique* was repatriated to France at British expense in September 1801 and disbanded, but many of its veterans saw further service in the Sailors of the Imperial Guard.

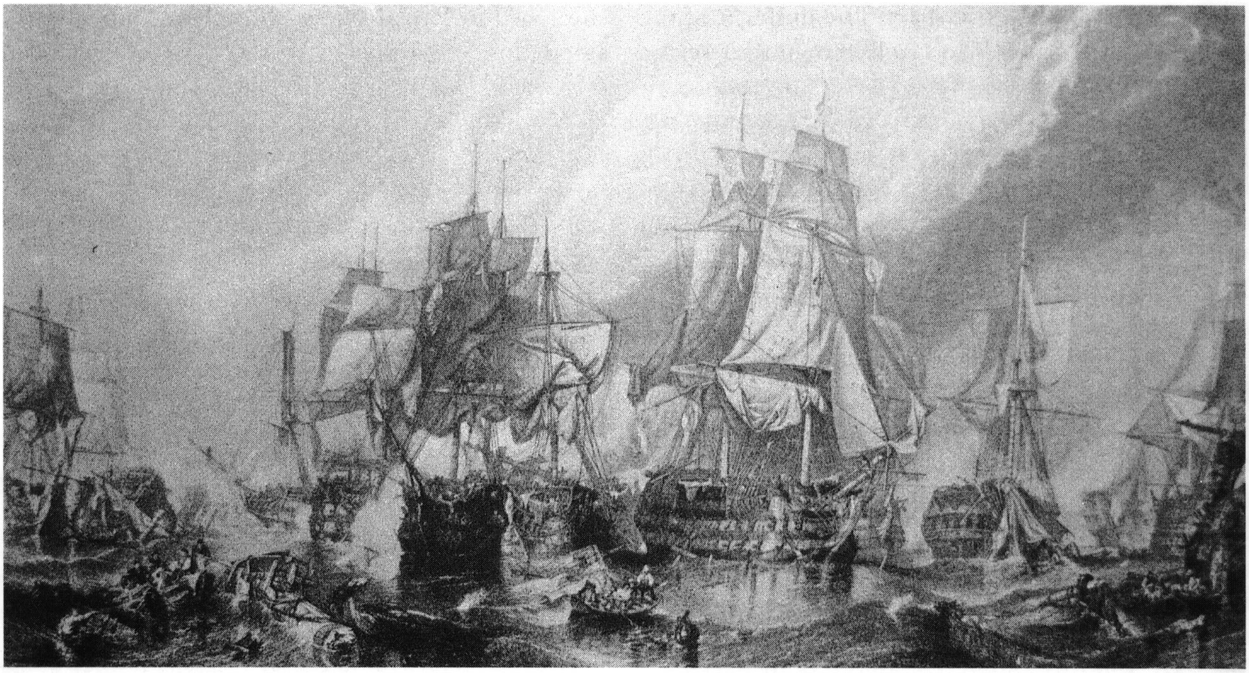
The Boulogne Flotilla

On 10 March 1801 a 'light flotilla' of 12 divisions was decreed to be built. These small craft were to patrol the coast from Flushing to Britanny, and the English Channel in particular. This flotilla could of course transport troops for a landing in England itself. Rear Admiral Latouche-Tréville was put in charge and went to work with much energy. Each small craft had a crew of sailors who had some military training, and soldiers acting as Marines or assault troops in a landing. By July there were enough small craft to transport about 30,000 troops. Bonaparte had no intention of invading England at the time since he had only 4,000 army troops assembled at Boulogne. However, his bluff worried the British and they attempted several raids in August, which failed miserably. In any event peace was in the air, hostilities ceased in October, and the treaty finally signed in March 1802. Shortly thereafter orders to disband the *Flotille légère* went out.

Barely a year later France and Britain were again at war. The idea of the *Flotille* came up again, but this time the invasion of England was a serious option, not a bluff. From late May 1803, Bonaparte was busy setting the building programme of the new *Flotille nationale*. At first a modest 150 small craft were needed by the First Consul, but by 24 June his requirements had grown to 850. By 5 July he called for 1,410, and by 22 August this had leapt to 2,000 boats, all of which were to have at least one cannon. It must have been a bewildering summer for Forfait, the Inspector General of the *Flotille nationale*, who was being ordered to obtain all this. The plan was to transport to England 72,000 infantry, 16,000 cavalry, 9,000 artillerymen and sappers along with over four hundred cannons. These early figures proved conservative as Napoleon later raised the number of men to be ferried across to 130,000. To man the boats some 21,000 sailors were required. To move the army into place was not a great problem, but plans to build and man such a large flotilla soon ran into problems, and the invasion had to be postponed until 1804. The Royal Navy was now keeping a very close watch, and knew it could not afford to lose control of the English Channel, even for a few hours. By August 1804 there were 2,244 boats ready to make the crossing, but they needed the protection of large ships of the line. The stalemate went into 1805 and the *Grande Armée* spent the summer encamped along the coast, waiting for Admiral Villeneuve's French fleet. But Villeneuve was being pursued by Admiral Nelson, whose pursuit led to the great battle of Trafalgar in October 1805, putting an end to Napoleon's hopes of invading England. Anyway, France was now at war with Austria and Russia, so the *Grande Armée* decamped from the coast and marched towards Austerlitz.



The left trunnion of this M. 1779 naval 18-pdr. gun shows that it was cast at Indret, the main centre for the manufacture of French naval ordnance. From a gun captured from a French ship during the Napoleonic wars and now in Plymouth, Montserrat. (Author)

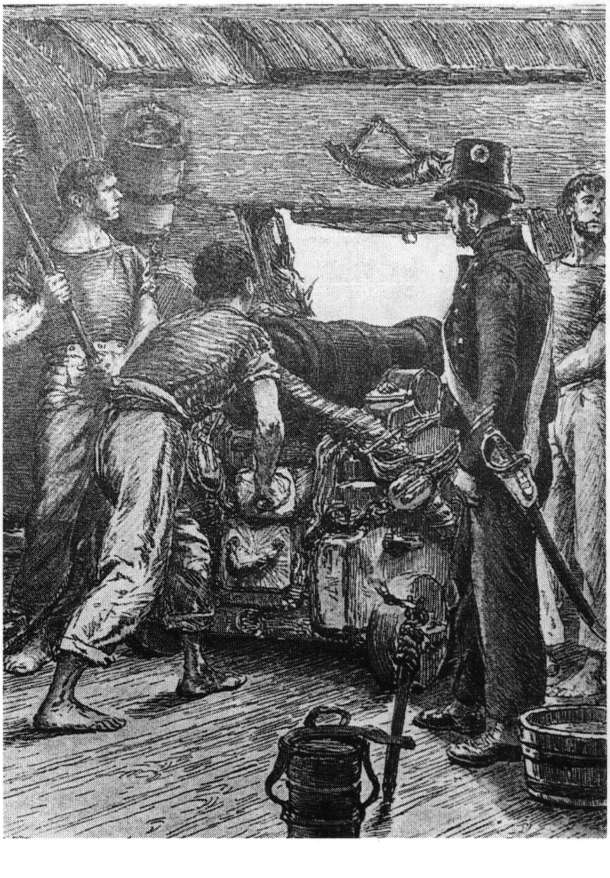


The battle of Trafalgar, fought on 21 October 1805, ensured British superiority at sea for a century. French and Spanish sea-soldiers were present as well as sailors. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd French Marine Artillery regiments all reported casualties at the battle, especially on the 74-gun *Redoutable*, which fought Admiral Nelson's 100-gun HMS *Victory*. Print after the painting by Clarkson Stanfield. (Private collection)

The Sailors of the Guard

The projected invasion of England brought about a new unit of the Consular (later Imperial) Guard on 17 September 1803: the *Bataillon des matelots de la garde*. They are nearly always called 'Marines of the Guard' in English, but the word *matelot* in French translates to 'sailor' in English. Calling them 'Marines' is understandable considering the very military appearance of these sailors, who wore shakos and were armed like élite soldiers. The battalion was 737 strong, divided into five crews. The unit soon marched away towards Ulm in 1805. In 1808 they were in Spain and many of the 300 present at Baylen were killed or wounded. Restructured and renamed *Equipage des matelots de la Garde impériale*, and sent to the Danube in 1809, their strength was raised to 1,136 officers and men in 1810. They crossed the Niemen river into Russia in 1812, but only a third survived the terrible retreat. They then participated in the 1813 and 1814 campaigns. When disbanded on 30 June 1814, only 14 officers and 336 men were left. A small *Equipage* of 94, later 150, men was organised in the spring of 1815 but was disbanded after

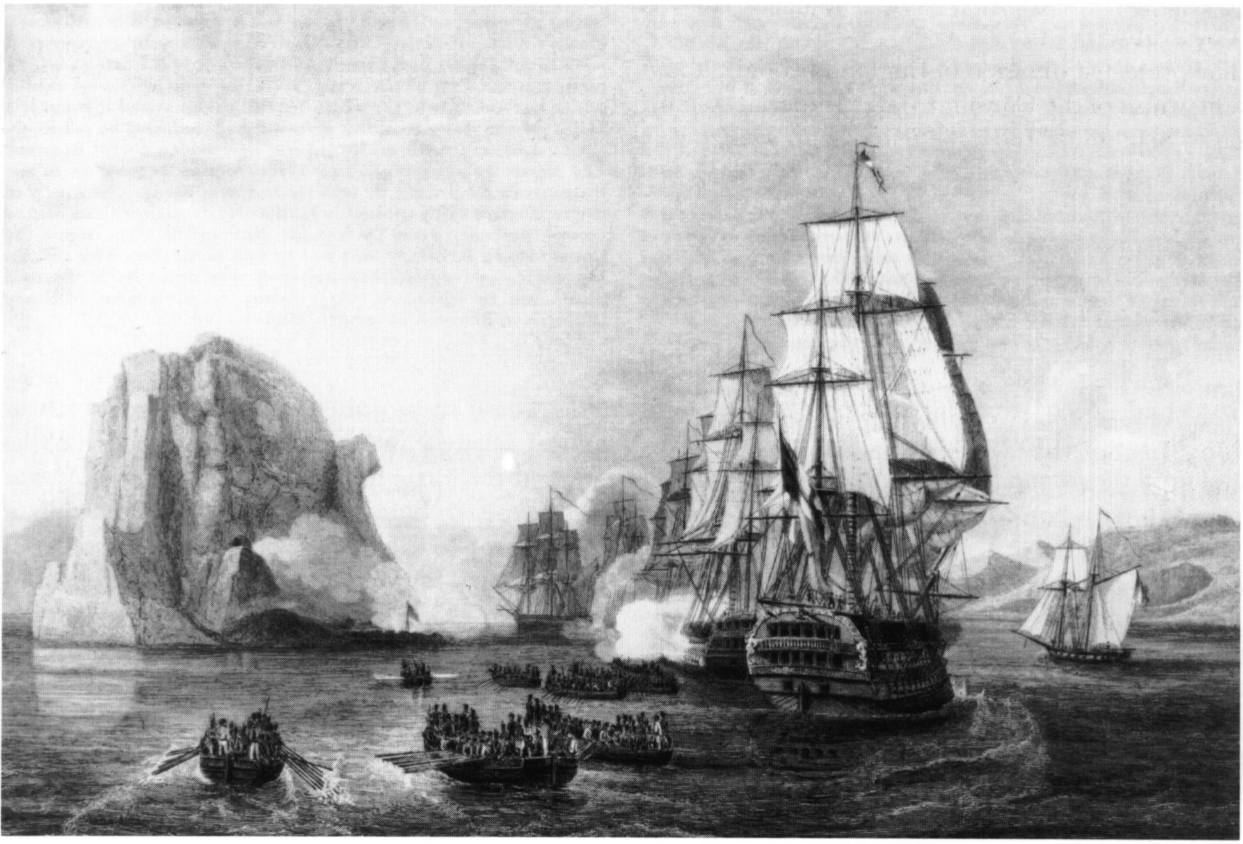
Lower gun deck of a French warship, *c.*1805. Sailors manoeuvre the cannon while a *quartier-maître* looks on. He wears a dark blue *paletot* with two yellow laces on his sleeve indicating his rank. A gunnery master (*maître-canonnier*) had a red collar and red sleeve lace. Illustration by Edouard Détaille in *L'Armée française* published in 1885. (Private collection)



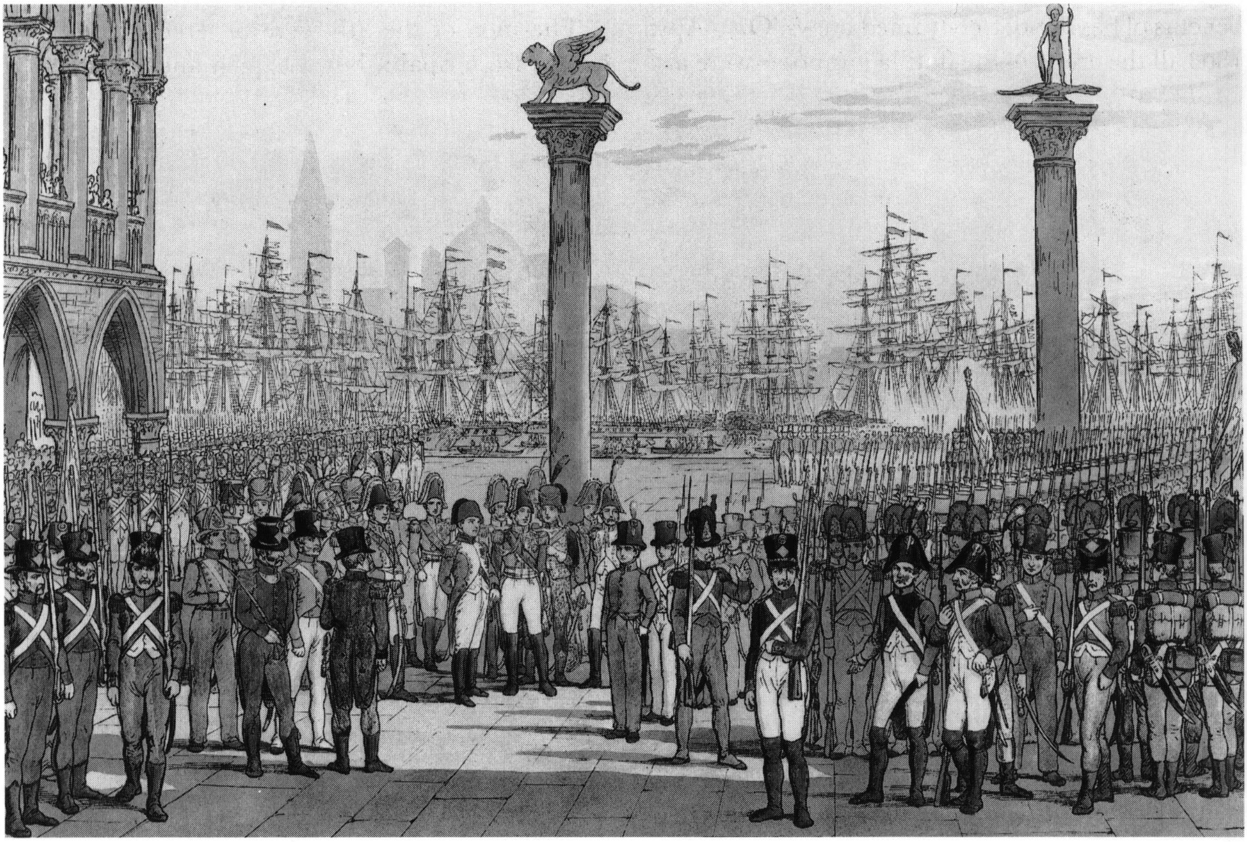
Waterloo on 15 August 1815. The uniform of the Sailors of the Guard is too well known to describe again in this work. Several illustrations in this book, taken from contemporary prints, show the dress and undress uniform.

After Trafalgar

Napoleon found himself with weak and demoralized remnants of a high-seas fleet and flotilla. The Boulogne flotilla crews had been organised into 14 battalions on 10 August 1805. This time, however, the flotilla was not disbanded and its better gunboats were used for coastal service, escorting convoys of small commercial vessels along the Channel. Gunboat No. 88 was probably typical and is described in 1808 by Leconte, then a young officer, as armed with four 12-pdrs. and a 32-pdr. carronade ('of English origin'), having a crew of 60 sailors with 15 soldiers detached from a line regiment. Such gunboats might be useful on the coast but meant nothing against the powerful ships of the Royal Navy. Napoleon fully understood this and resolved to rebuild the fleet by a large and long-term construction programme. Vast sums of money were poured into the great military ports in order to build new ships of the line. By 1811 the programme was running smoothly and six to seven ships of the line from 74- to 118 guns were launched every year until Napoleon abdicated in 1814. The French fleet then had 81 ships of the line with 18 more under construction. There were also about 100 frigates afloat or under construction at that date. In time, given good leadership and opportunity, there is no doubt that this new fleet would have united and challenged the Royal Navy. Instead, many of these new ships were dispersed or destroyed by the allies as they occupied the French naval bases during the summer of 1814. This third blow—the



The French capture of the British island redoubt of *Le Diamant*, off Martinique on 25 June 1805, is an example of the collaboration that existed between land and sea forces. This action was on a fairly small scale, the objective being an 'impregnable' redoubt, which was nevertheless taken. Larger-scale examples of such operations include the capture of Malta and the landing of Napoleon's army in Egypt. (National Library of Canada)



Uniforms shown at a 'Review of the Italian Navy at Venice by the Emperor and King Napoleon on 29 November 1807'. At left, two sailors of the Royal Guard wearing round hats with brass diamond-shaped plates, dark green coat and breeches, red collar, cuffs and waistcoat, light green epaulettes and hat plumes; then an army light infantryman, a Naval gunner in dark green with white piping and red cuff flap; a sailors of the Royal Guard officer with silver epaulettes, round hat, epaulettes and gorget; a back view of a navy officer in dark green with white piping and silver epaulettes wearing a round hat; Napoleon and his suite at the centre; naval cadets in dark green with red waistcoats and round hats; a Marine Artillery soldier wearing a round hat with a black crest from left to right and a triangular white metal plate, dark green uniform piped white with black collar and cuffs and red epaulettes; a soldier of the Guard of Venice in a sky blue coat with red collar, cuffs and piping and brass buttons and shako plate; a gunner of the Coast Guard Artillery in a green coat with black lapels and piping and white metal buttons with a bicorn; a veteran of the navy in dark green with red lapels, white collar and cuffs, white metal buttons and a bicorn; a sailor of the navy wearing a round hat and and an all-dark-green uniform with white piping and white metal buttons. The figures to the right are army troops belonging to the Dalmatian Regiment. It was meant as a composite study of the uniforms off Napoleon's Italian Navy rather than all the troops actually seen by him in November 1807, since the Coast Guard Artillery was not raised until 1810. The colouring varies on various examples of this print by R. Focossi published in Milan in 1845. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

first had been the Revolution, the second Trafalgar—was to be fatal for the French navy. Not until the second half of the 19th century would France have a powerful battle fleet again.

The 1808 military organization of the crews

The second problem after ship procurement was that of manpower. There were not enough sailors, and in Napoleon's view they should have had military training. He also did not wish to see again the undisciplined mobs who had formed the crews of some ships in the days of the Revolution. His solution was clear and simple: militarise the sailors. This would seem quite normal today, but it was almost a heresy in his day. On 2 March 1808 he ordered the formation of 50 *Bataillons de la Marine impériale*, each battalion assigned to man a ship of the line or two frigates. It was a radical step. Each battalion was numbered and had 500 officers and men (divided into four companies of 120 each plus staff). Each sailor was issued with a distinctive uniform, a musket, a bayonet and accoutrements. The battalions were organised to accommodate about 150 conscripts as apprentice sailors. There was considerable grumbling at first among the officers, but they came around as they realised the benefits of having better-trained crews. On 7 April 1808 all the crews of the flotilla gunboats were also formed into *Bataillons de Flotille*. Probably in order to avoid confusion and give more naval names, the battalions were renamed *Equipages de Haut-Bord* (which could be loosely translated as 'crews of ships of the line') and *Equipages de Flotille* (Flotilla crews) in 1810. The ships assigned to many of the *Haut-Bord* crews were named in a dispatch from Napoleon to Décrès and were as follows:

Stations of 28 *Equipages de Haut-Bord* in July 1810

Battalion	Ship	Port
1	*Austerlitz*	Toulon
2	*Danube*	Toulon
3	*Ulm*	Toulon
4	*Triomphant*	Rochefort (461 men in Spain)
5	*Adrienne*	Rochefort
6	*Hortense, Elbe*	Rochefort
8	on 3 vessels	Rochefort
11	*Eyleau*	Lorient
12	*Polonais*	Lorient
13	*Pallas*	Rochefort
14	*Clorinde, Renommée*	Brest
15	'In the Indian Ocean'	Rochefort (depot only)
16	*Annibal*	Toulon
17	*Jennapes*	Rochefort
19	On 4 vessels	Toulon
21	*Génois*	Toulon
22	*Donawert*	
30	*Breslaw*	
31	*Amazone, Elisa*	Le Havre
32	*Néréide*	Brest
33	*Charlemagne*	Antwerp
34	*Commerce de Lyon*	Antwerp
35	*Anversois*	Antwerp
36	*Dalmate*	Antwerp
37	*Duguesclin*	Antwerp
38	*César*	Antwerp
39	*Ville de Berlin*	Antwerp
40	*Albanais*	Antwerp

The men of the 4th were ordered to be withdrawn from Spain, but the 44th and 45th served there from 1810 to 1813. Some had also served in Germany and Austria during the 1809 campaign, more as soldiers than as sailors. Napoleon's concept was that sailors could also be Marines if need be, with military training.

In 1811 the establishment grew to 63 *Equipages de Haut-Bord*, of which 18 were in the Mediterranean, including three in Venice, seven at Rochefort, four at Lorient, two at Brest, three at Cherbourg, 22 at Antwerp and seven at Texel. There were also 22 *Equipages de Flotille*, including two Dutch, for a total of 85 *Equipages* crews totalling 59,000 men. In 1812 there were 76 *de Haut-Bord* and 24 *de Flotille*. On 18 March 1813 the flotilla crews were ordered to be abolished and their men incorporated to the *Haut-Bord*, although this does not appear to have been completely carried out. In any event, the total number of *Equipages* crews now reached 110. Their strength was to be between 700 and 900 men each. In round figures, this meant an establishment of 100,000 men for the navy. While this figure was probably never reached, it shows a considerable increase in strength since 1808 and Napoleon's determination to rebuild the French navy.

Unfortunately, most of these men never sailed out of their harbours to break the blockades of the hated *Anglais*, as the fleet was not yet strong enough for such actions. Instead, as the enemies of France approached on land from the east, the sailors were called to fight the invaders. The 1813 conscripts for the navy went to the army instead, while others were detached to reinforce the battalions of *pontonniers* and *ouvriers* in Italy and Germany. In January 1814, each *Equipage de Haut-Bord* was instructed to send a 120-man company of *marins-artilleurs* (sailors-gunners) to serve with the army. Some, such as the company of the 9th, took part in the last battles right up to Paris. Following the exile of Napoleon the new government of Louis XVIII disbanded the *Equipages de Haut-Bord* and went back to the old ways.

Napoleon returned to France from Elba in 1815 and on 24 April decreed the formation of 40 *Equipages de Haut-Bord*. Each was to have four companies of Fusiliers, one of Grenadiers and one of Voltigeurs. Two *Equipages* formed a Regiment.

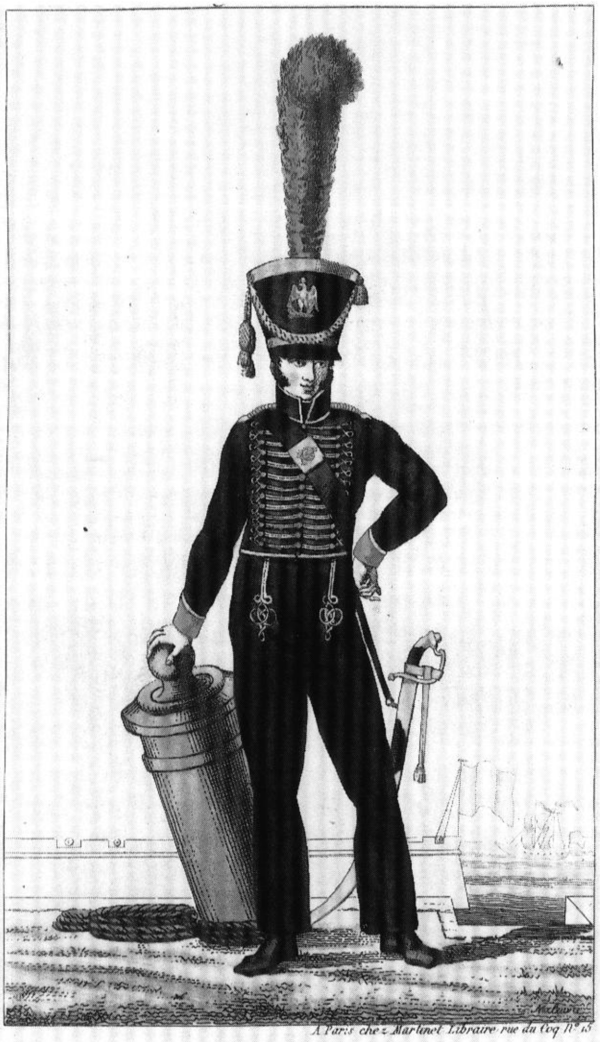
But many were never raised before the battle of Waterloo in June. Toulon only had time to form the 17th Regiment before the orders came to disband the *Equipages*. None were in action during the Hundred Days except for minor incidents such as the 9th Regiment's retaking of Fort Lalatte from Royalists near Saint-Malo.

Uniform of navy officers

Up to 1792, the uniforms of naval officers were those of the 1786 navy regulations, but this changed on 16 September. From then on General Officers of the navy—admirals of various ranks—wore the same uniforms as army generals of the corresponding rank, except for the buttons, which had an anchor design. This rule remained the same for the rest of the period under study. Admirals had the same uniform as generals, vice admirals the same as generals of divisions, and rear admirals the same as brigadier generals. Captains and other officers were to have a dark blue coat with no lapels and a cuff with three buttons, white collar and scarlet turnbacks, gilded buttons, scarlet waistcoat and breeches, plain bicorn hat, epaulettes and sword knot, as in the army (see plate B).

On 25 October 1795 the uniform was changed to a dark blue coat with scarlet stand and fall collar, dark blue lapels—worn more like a double-breasted coat—and cuffs, scarlet cuff flap, scarlet lining piped white, gilded buttons, scarlet waistcoat (white in summer), blue breeches, and gilded sabre hilt. The style of this uniform was not quite as 'military' but was very much in tune with that of officials of the Revolution. Rank was designated by embroidery and epaulettes: a captain, had gold embroidery on the cuffs and collar, and gold epaulettes and sword knot, and a plain bicorn. Lieutenants had no embroidery and the epaulettes of army captains, while naval ensigns had the epaulettes of army lieutenants. On 25 August 1800 embroidery was abolished on the coats of the captains but the portrait of Captain Magendie painted at Naples in 1802 still shows the embroidery on the collar and cuffs, and on the pocket flaps as well (see plate D).

An extensive uniform regulation was issued on 27 May 1804, which remained in force to the end of Napoleon's rule (see plates E and G). The style of this 1804 uniform was more military. Admirals continued to have generals' uniforms. Captains of ships of the line were assigned for full dress a single-breasted dark blue coat and coat lining, with scarlet collar and cuffs; gold embroidery bearing an anchor design at the buttonholes (nine in front, three to each cuff and pocket, two at each side of the collar, one at each hip and each slit of the tails); gold buttons and bullion fringe epaulettes lined red; white waistcoat; dark blue breeches (white allowed in summer); plain bicorn with gold tassels and cockade loop; black boots with turndowns when on board or on duty; and white stockings and


Maleuvre
A Paris chez Martinet Libraire rue du Coq N° 15

Sailor of the Imperial Guard, *c.*1807. He wears the dark blue full dress uniform with scarlet cuffs, hussar-style orange-yellow lace on the *paletot* and the pantaloons, large red plume on the fully garnished shako. Plate No. 61 of the series *Troupes françaises* engravd by Maleuvre, published by Martinet. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

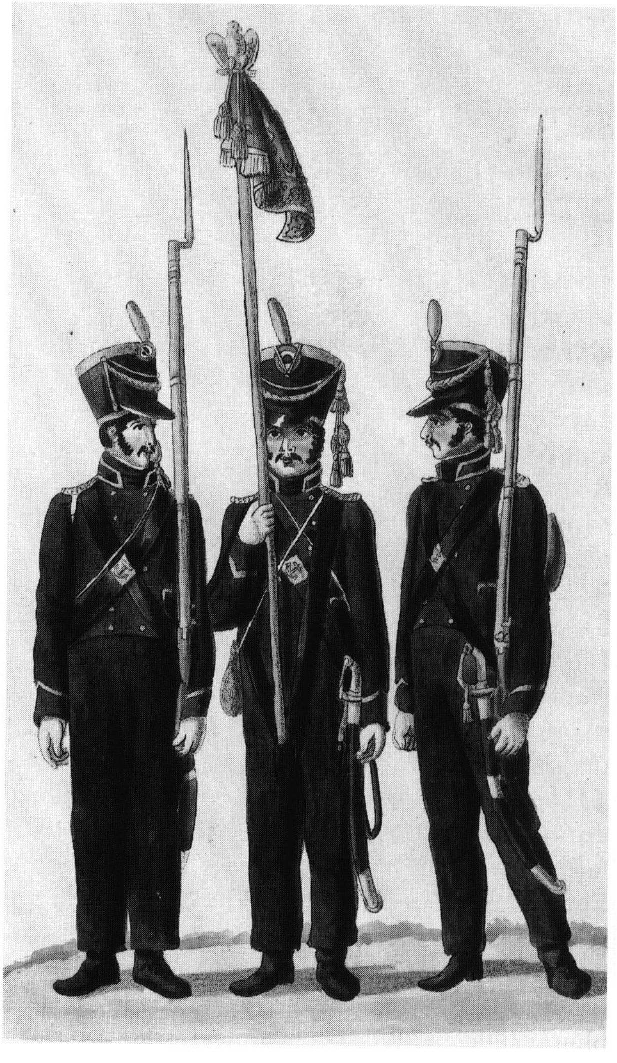
shoes with silver buckles allowed in summer. A black cloth stock was worn on board, white on land. Frigate captains had the same, but the coat had only seven of the nine buttonholes embroidered: two at the top, two at the bottom, and three at the middle; with bullion fringe epaulette at the right shoulder and plain counter epaulette. Lieutenants and ensigns had embroidery only at the collar, lieutenants having two epaulettes with thin fringe, ensigns one fringed and a counter epaulette. A gilt-hilted sabre (on board ship) or small sword (on land), with gold sword knot, with a black scabbard trimmed with gilt furnishings carried on a black waist-belt trimmed with more or less gold lace according to rank, and a gold belt-plate rounded off the full dress. For the undress uniform the coat was entirely dark blue with the gold embroidery only on the collar and cuffs; epaulettes according to rank, white waistcoat and dark blue breeches. Other details were to be as full dress.

Naval officers attached to a staff function had additional distinctions, most notably plumes on their hats. For instance, a captain also doing duty as adjutant was allowed a red plume with a white tip while a lieutenant doing the same duty had a blue plume with a red tip. If an officer was an adjutant or aide to an admiral, a white armband with gold fringe was worn on the left arm: scarlet with gold fringe for a vice admiral, blue with gold fringe for a rear admiral.

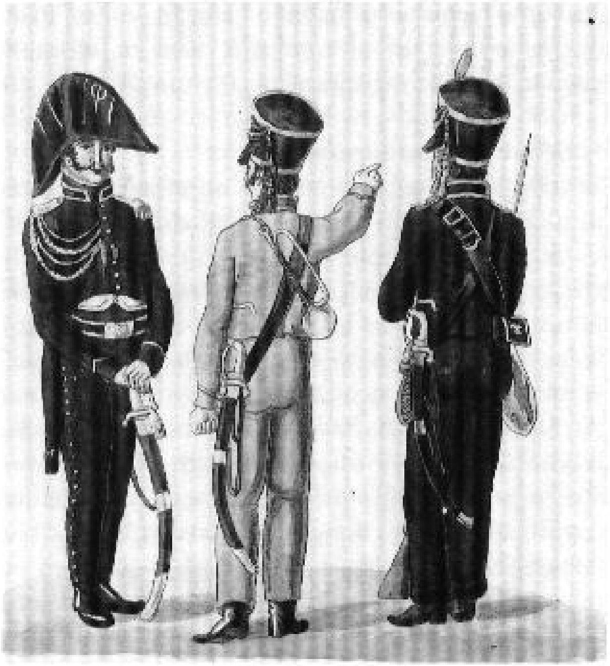
There were many variations and Leconte, then a junior officer, remembered in his memoirs such items as full dress uniforms with dark blue cuffs and collar instead of scarlet; some coats with turnbacks added on the tails; pantaloons instead of breeches; 'Russian' boots (considered most elegant) or even high cavalry boots; the bicorns—sometimes enormous—worn fore and aft or sideways, if worn at all, since some officers liked round hats better. The sabres were found cumbersome by many officers who sported dirks instead, a practice that was forbidden by the Emperor himself in the strongest terms on 5 October 1807. In reality, strict obedience to the decree was not an absolute priority with naval officers.

Uniform of the *Equipages*

Strictly speaking, sailors had no official uniform until 1804, but, from the time of the Revolution, there were attempts to clothe them in a fairly standard dress. The National Assembly decreed in February 1794 that all sailors on warships of the Republic were to be provided with six shirts (two white, four blue), two pairs linen trousers, a round hat, four pairs of socks, two pairs of shoes, three jackets and three waistcoats, a cloth cap and three handkerchiefs. This was surely not honoured for most sailors but there were attempts by the Republic to provide some clothing, as is shown by the contracts for 20,000 blue, brown or dark grey



Sailors of the Guard: standard or guidon bearer with a sailor on each side, *c.*1809. All wear shako with *aurore* bands and cords and the red pom-pom, the undress dark blue *paletot* jacket with *aurore* lace edging the collar, cuffs and pockets, brass scale shoulder straps, black accoutrements with brass belt-plate, and dark blue pantaloons. Plate by Christoph Suhr. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)



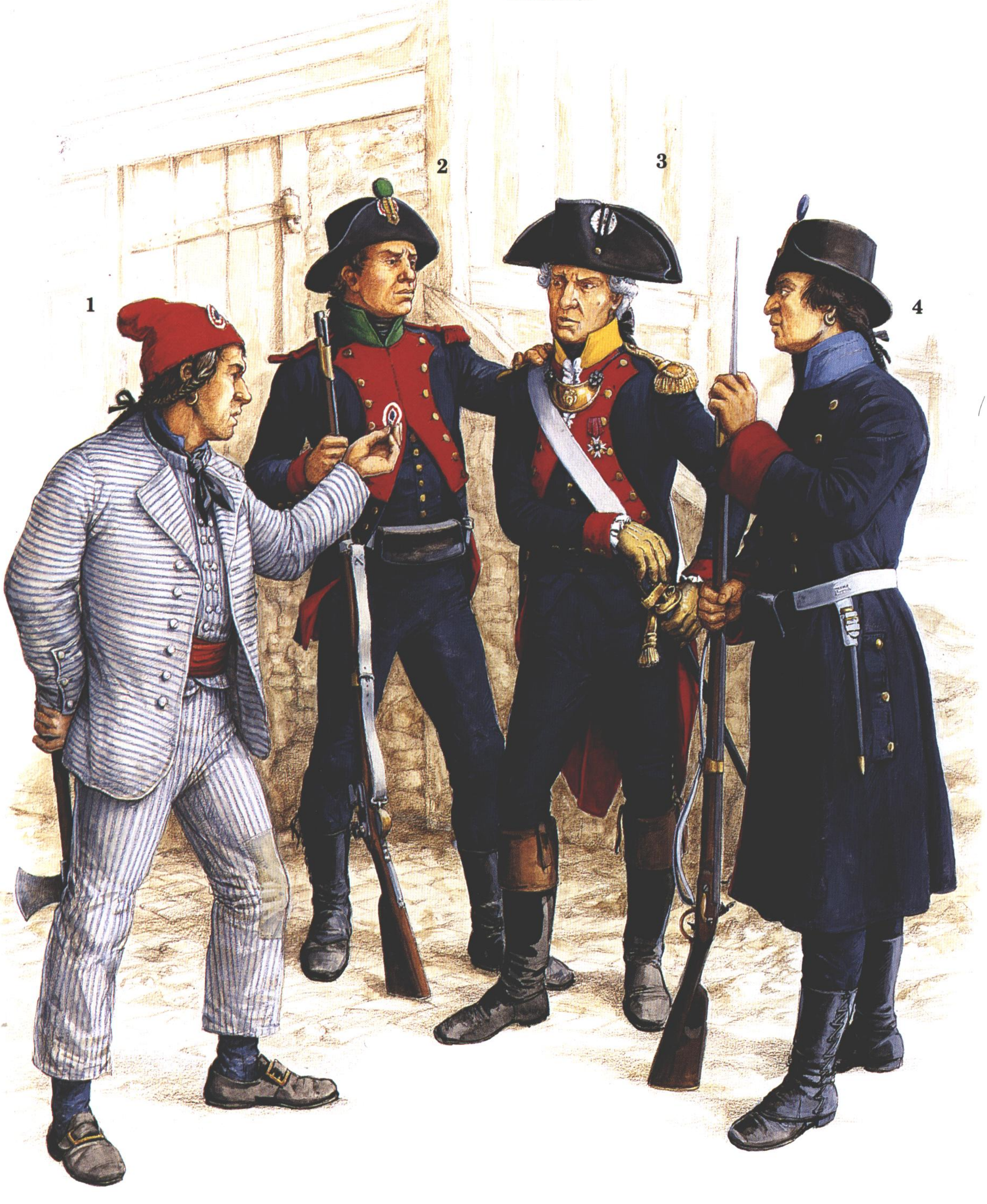
Sailors of the Imperial Guard, *c.*1809. A rare back view of the sailor's *paletot* worn here by a trumpeter (at centre in light blue) and a sailor (at right in dark blue). The ordinary ship of the line sailor's *paletot* would have been the same except for the *aurore* lace of the guard. A lieutenant wearing the dark blue undress *surtout* with gold lace, epaulettes and aiguillettes faces them (at left). Plate by Christoph Suhr. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

wool *paletots*, with jackets (or waistcoat) and long trousers in August 1796. Some 30,000 brown or grey woollen caps were contracted for in October 1797 (see plate B). Louis Garneray, who joined the navy as a sailor in 1796, recalled receiving a rather 'sad' suit of clothing of coarse black linen at Rochefort. Sashes worn around the waist were popular with French sailors and, while a few ships reportedly had their crews with a white or a blue sash, red was the favoured colour and seems to have become the universal choice by about 1800. In spite of repeated decrees concerning the issues of clothing, it is obvious that many wore their own garments, some of which had regional features (see plate C).

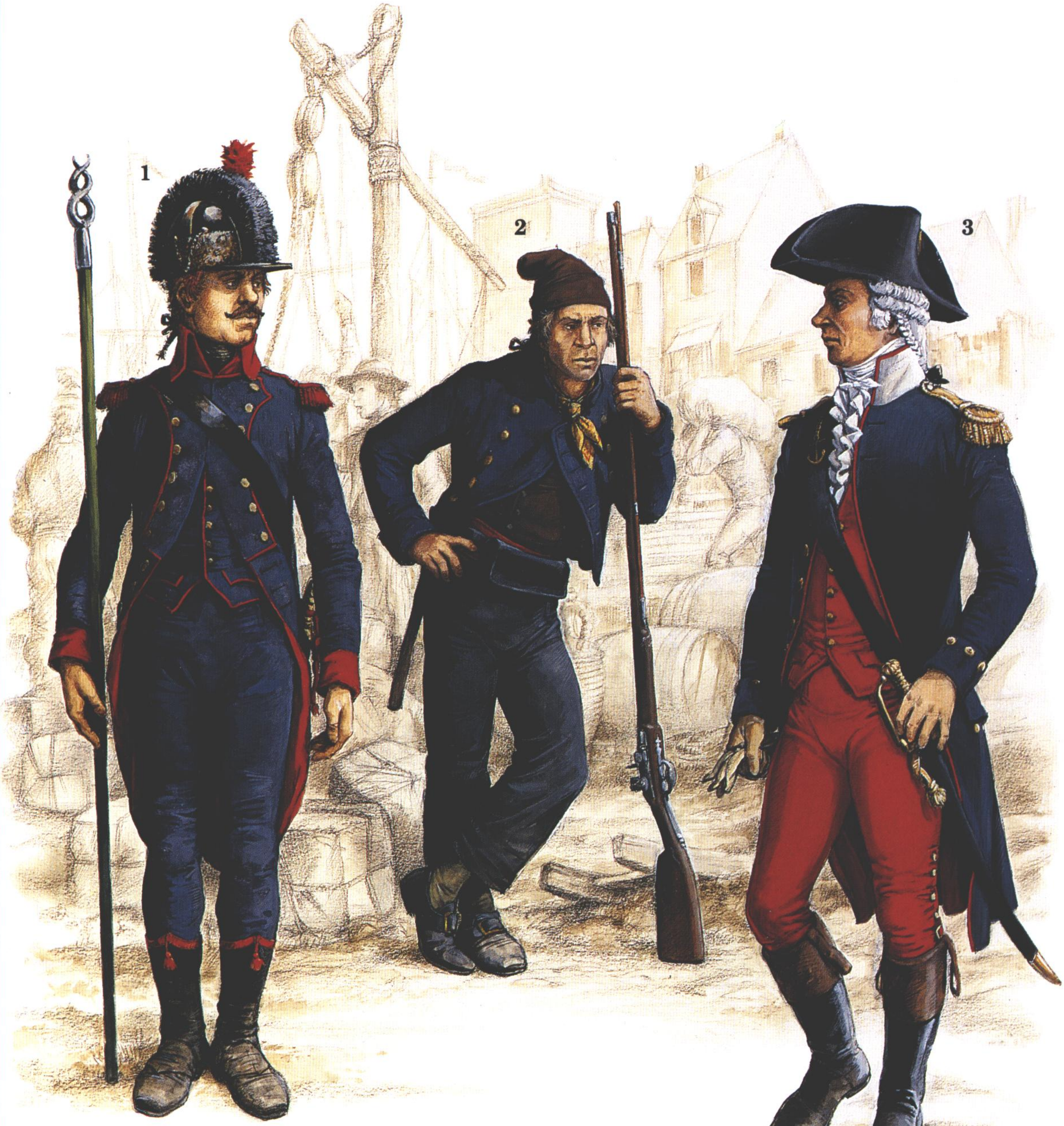
The first sailors to be issued a military uniform during this period were the survivors of Abukir, formed into the *Légion Nautique* in Alexandria, Egypt. From November 1798 to December 1799 the infantry wore a round hat, red coatee with white collar and turnbacks, blue cuffs and lapels, brass buttons, white waistcoat, white trousers with blue or blue and red stripes and white half gaiters. From December 1799 to September 1801 the coatee was red with white collar, no lapels, blue cuffs and turnbacks, blue piping edging the front and the pocket flaps, cloth covered 'ton sur ton' buttons (which meant red buttons on red ground), white waistcoat, trousers and half gaiters (see plate C). Fusiliers had red shoulder straps piped blue, Grenadiers had red epaulettes. They all carried infantry weapons and equipment. The artillery section had a similar uniform except for a blue collar and no arms except a hanger. The Pioneers section had red collar and lapels in 1798–99, red collar only thereafter and yellow epaulettes for the whole period. Officers had the same colours as their men but wore bicorns, long tailed coats and boots.

This first attempt to put the sailors in a uniform must have pleased Napoleon. Back in France, he obviously felt that this was lacking in the navy and, in July 1803, the sailors of the *Flotille nationale* were to wear a dark blue *paletot* with scarlet collar, cuff flap and a scarlet armband (see plate D). The next step was prescribing a uniform for all sailors, which occurred on 5 May 1804. Sailors of all ranks except commissioned officers were assigned a dark blue jacket and trousers with horn buttons, red waistcoat, round hat, and black cravat. The petty officer (*maîtres*) were assigned a dark blue *paletot* instead of a jacket, although it appears that in fact sailors had those as well. The *maîtres de manoeuvre* had an all-dark-blue *paletot* with two gold laces on the left sleeve and the *second maître* had one such lace, the *quartier-maîtres* had two yellow laces and the *gahiers* had one. The gunnery masters had a red collar and red lace on the sleeve. The *timonerie* (pilots) masters on ships as well as coastal pilots had *aurore* collar and lace. The *charpenterie* (shipwrights) masters had crimson collar and lace, the sailing masters had white; armourers and forge masters had black. Leconte's memoirs give us a glance at how all this was interpreted by the sailors he saw, who, we are told, often wore their hair long with a long queue tied with a black bow at the height of the waist. They had gold ear rings, wore a round hat with loose long hair on one side but very smooth on the other, and wore blue trousers very tight at the thigh but very wide at the ankle. The black cravat was tied with a knot, the scarlet waistcoat was edged with narrow gold cord, and

1: Sailor, 1789-90
Corps royal des Cannoniers-matelots, 1786-92
2: Fusilier
3: Officer
4: Fusilier

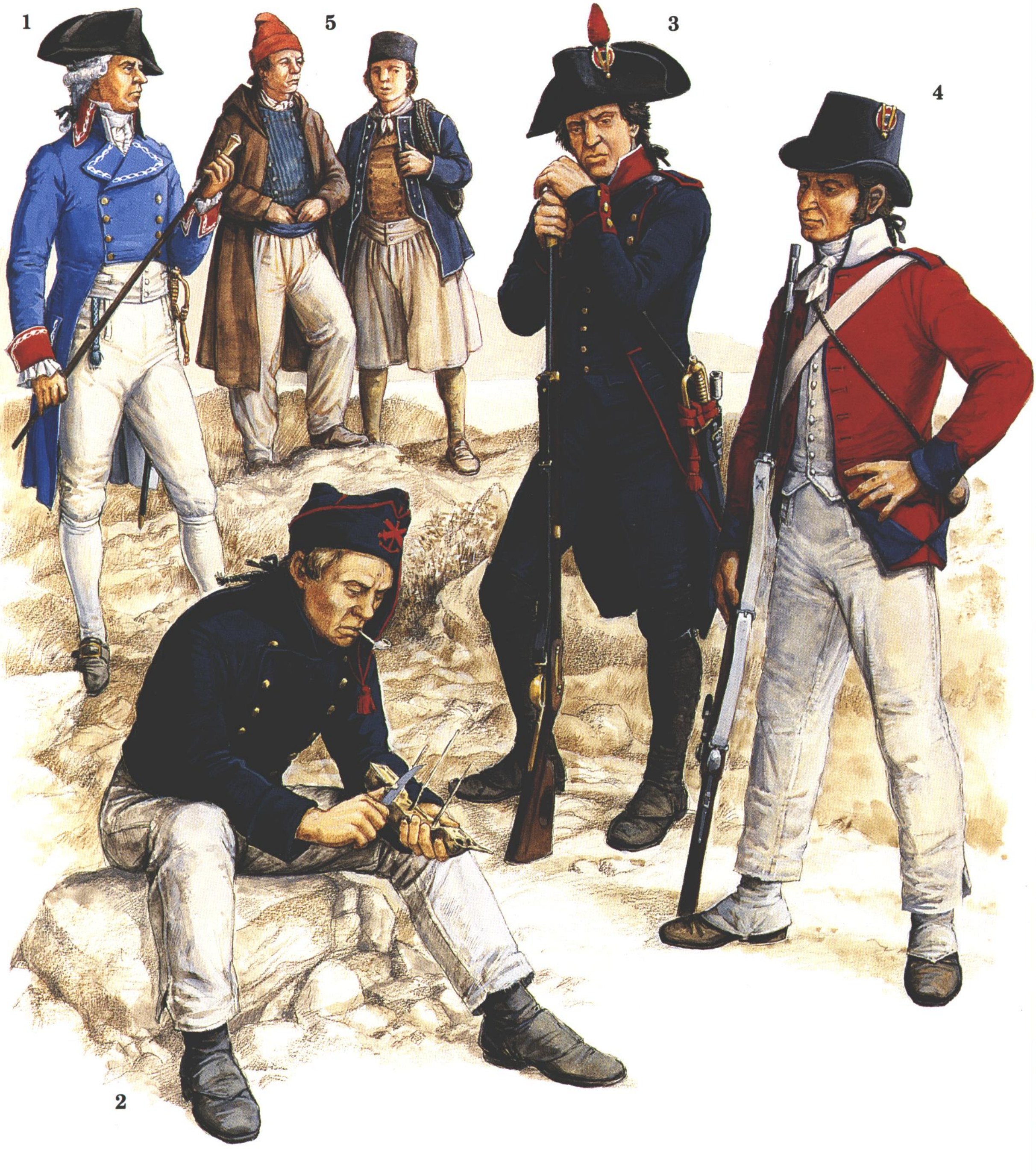


1: Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1792-94
2: Sailor, c.1796
3: Navy Officer, 1792-95

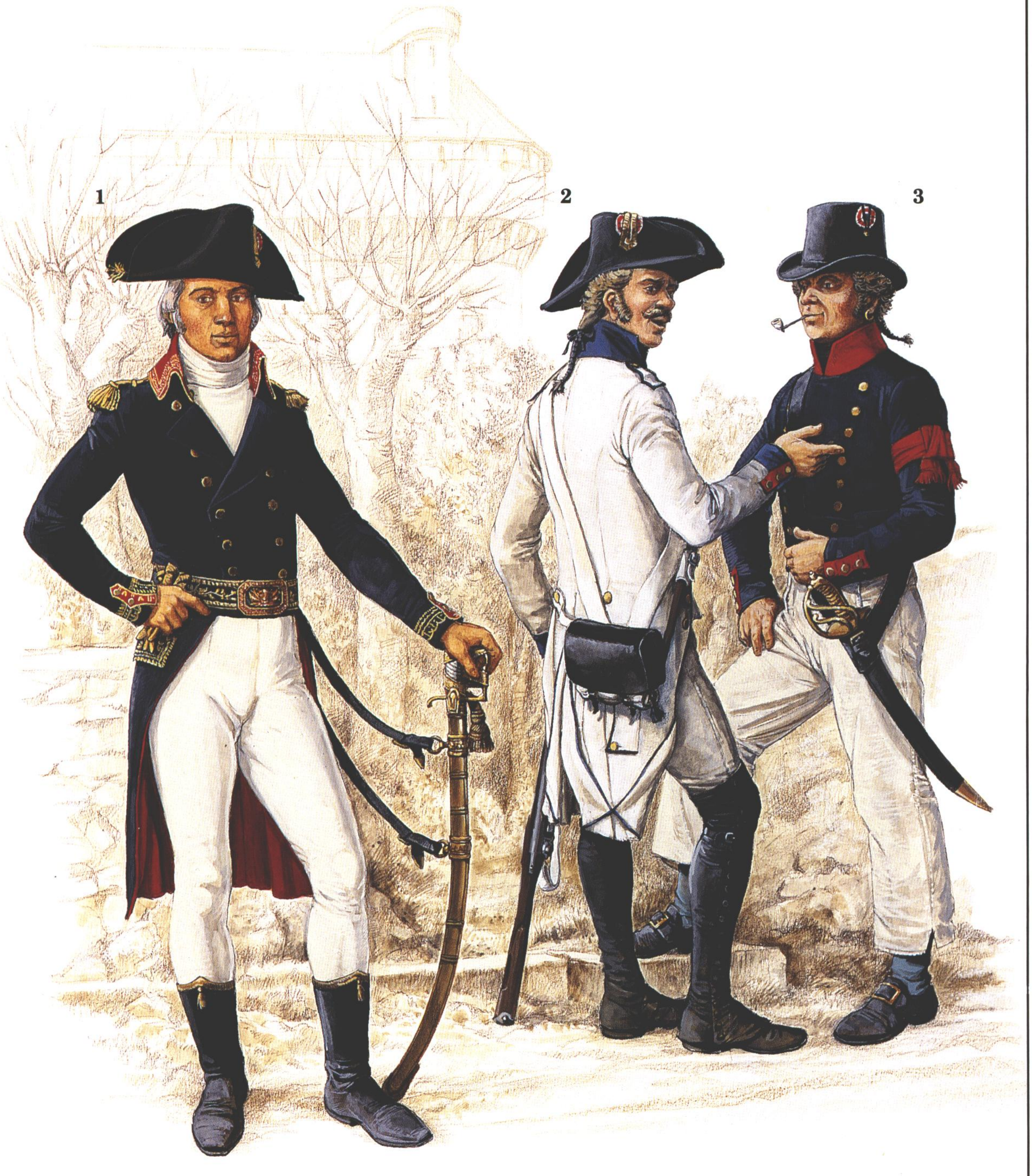


B

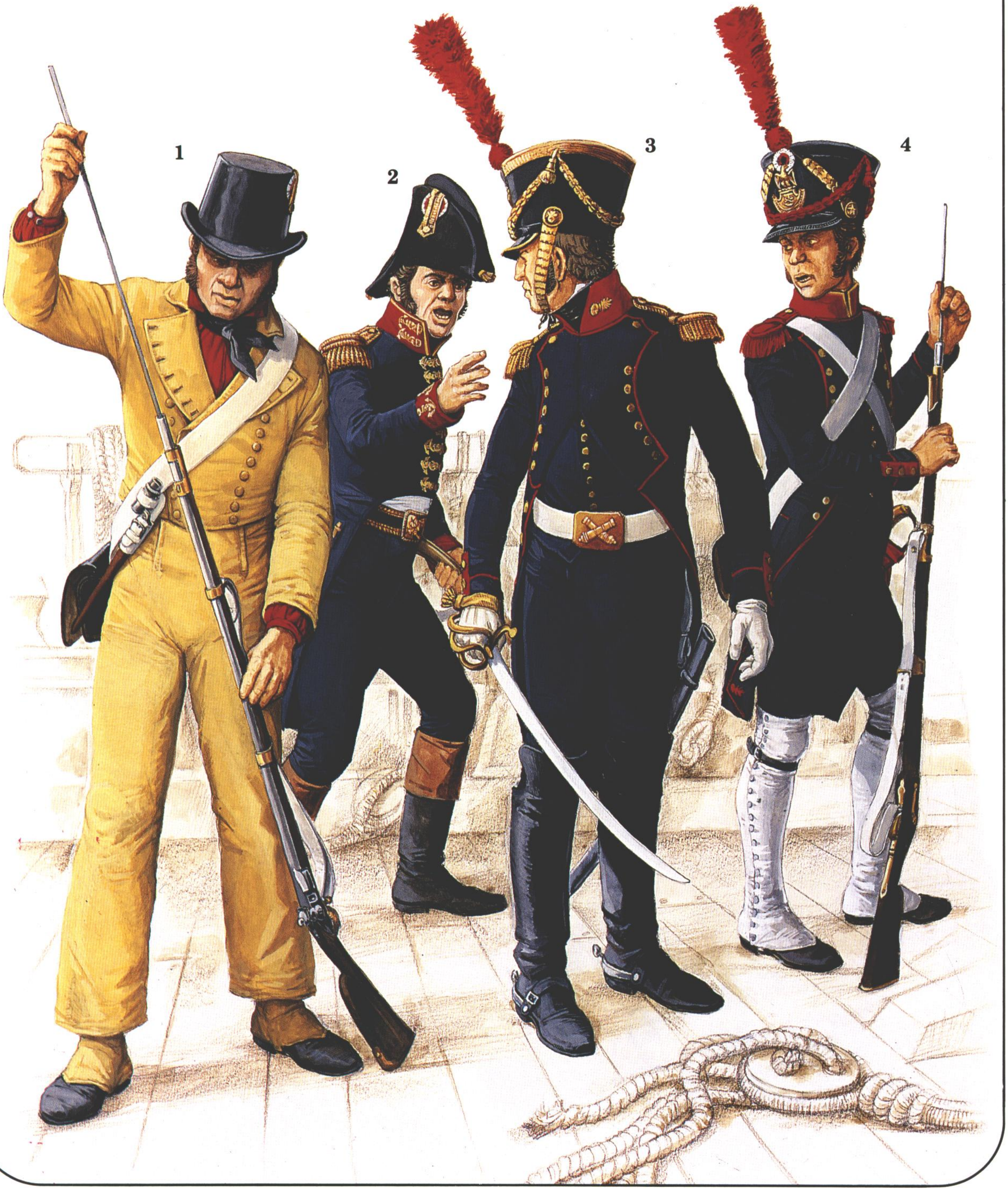
1: Commissaire ordinaire de la Marine, 1800-1804
2: Gunner, working dress, Marine Artillery, 1795-1803
3: Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1795-1803
4: Fusilier, Légion Nautique, 1799-1801
5: Sailors, c.1800



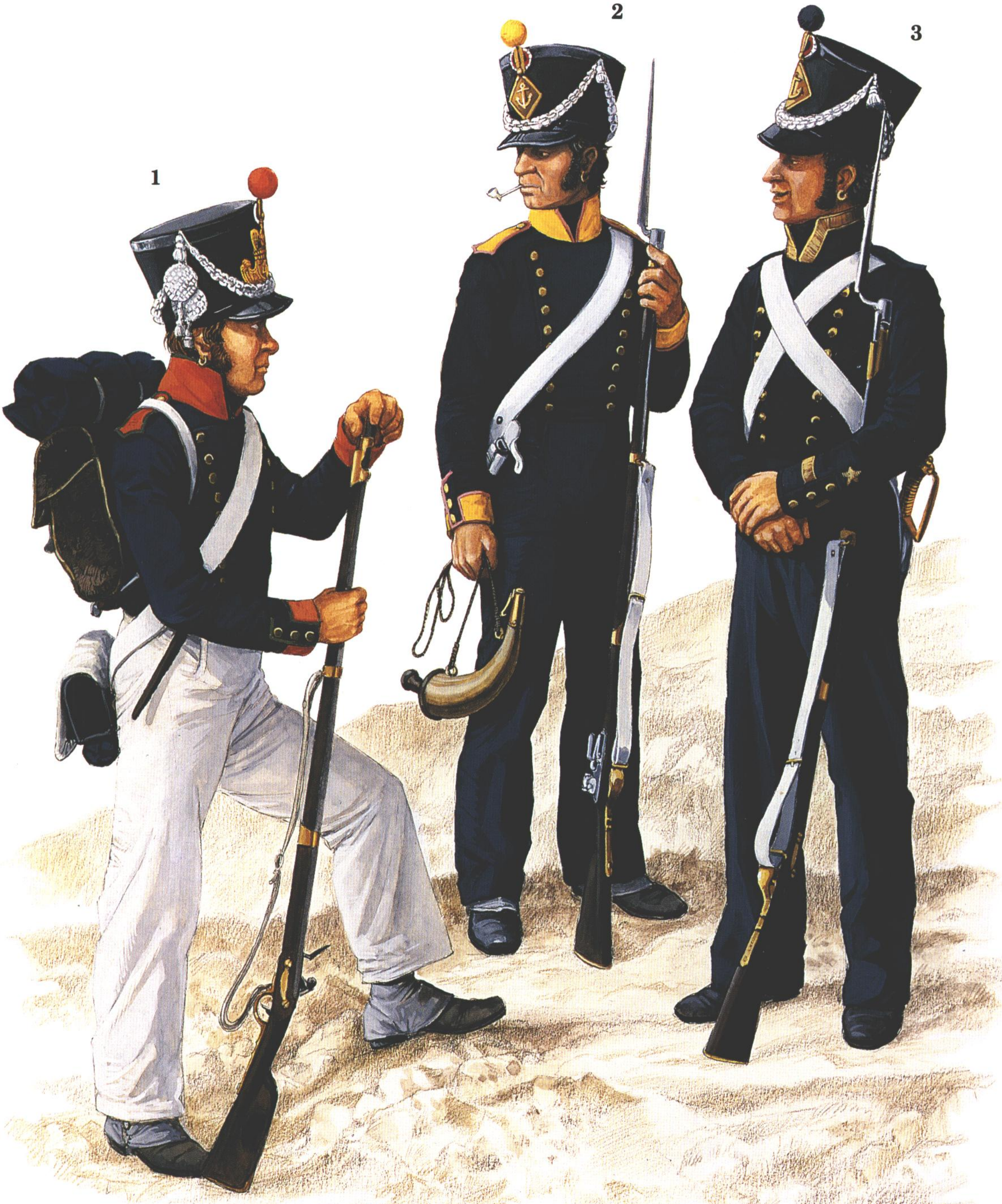
1: Ship's Captain, c.1802
2: Gunner, Coast Guard Artillery, 1803
3: Sailor of the Flotille nationale, 1803-1804



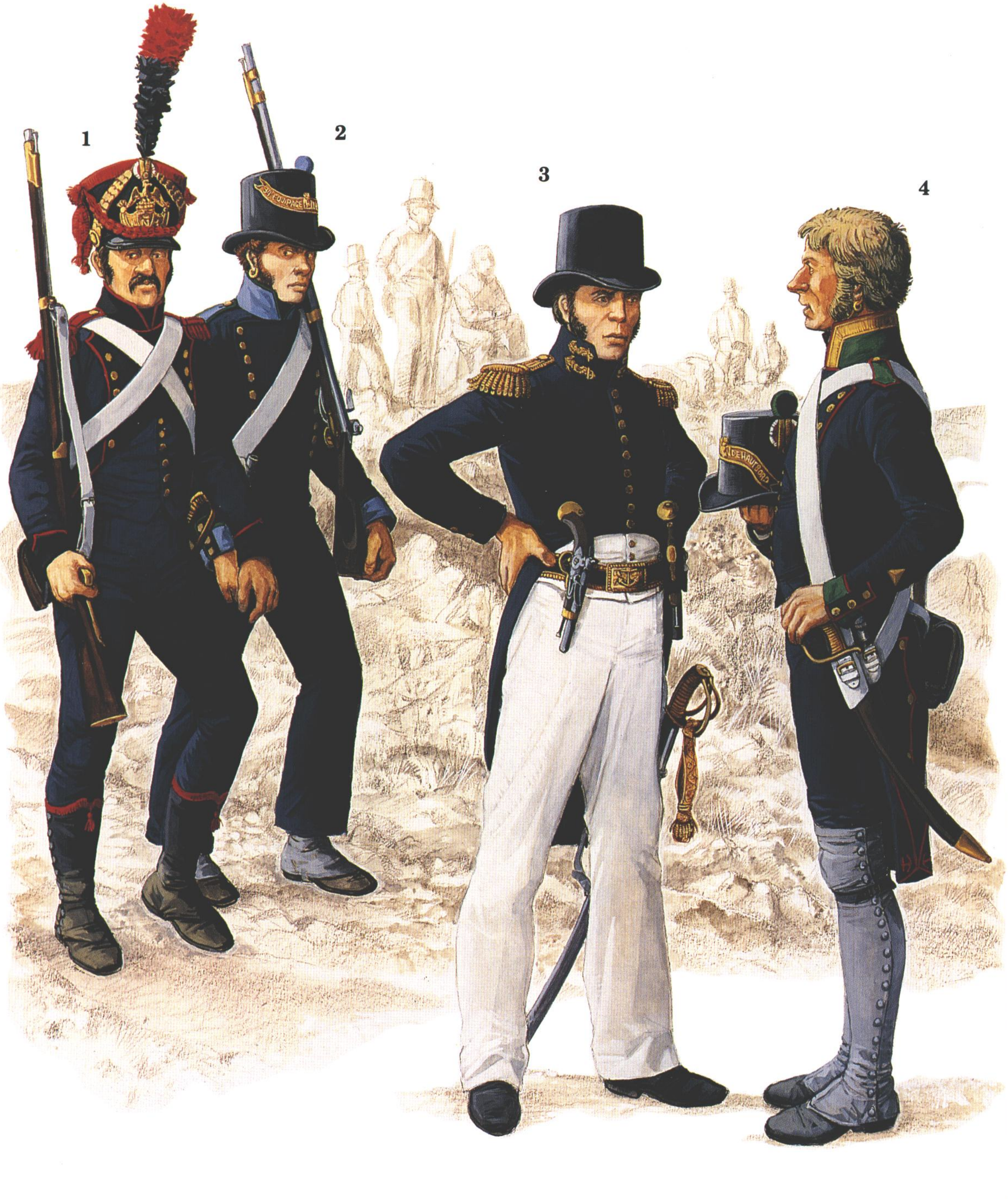
1: Sailor, Provisional Sailor's Battalion, Ile-de-France, 1810
2: Ship's Captain, full dress, 1804-1815
3: Officer, 1st Marine Artillery, 1809
4: First Class Master Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1807-12



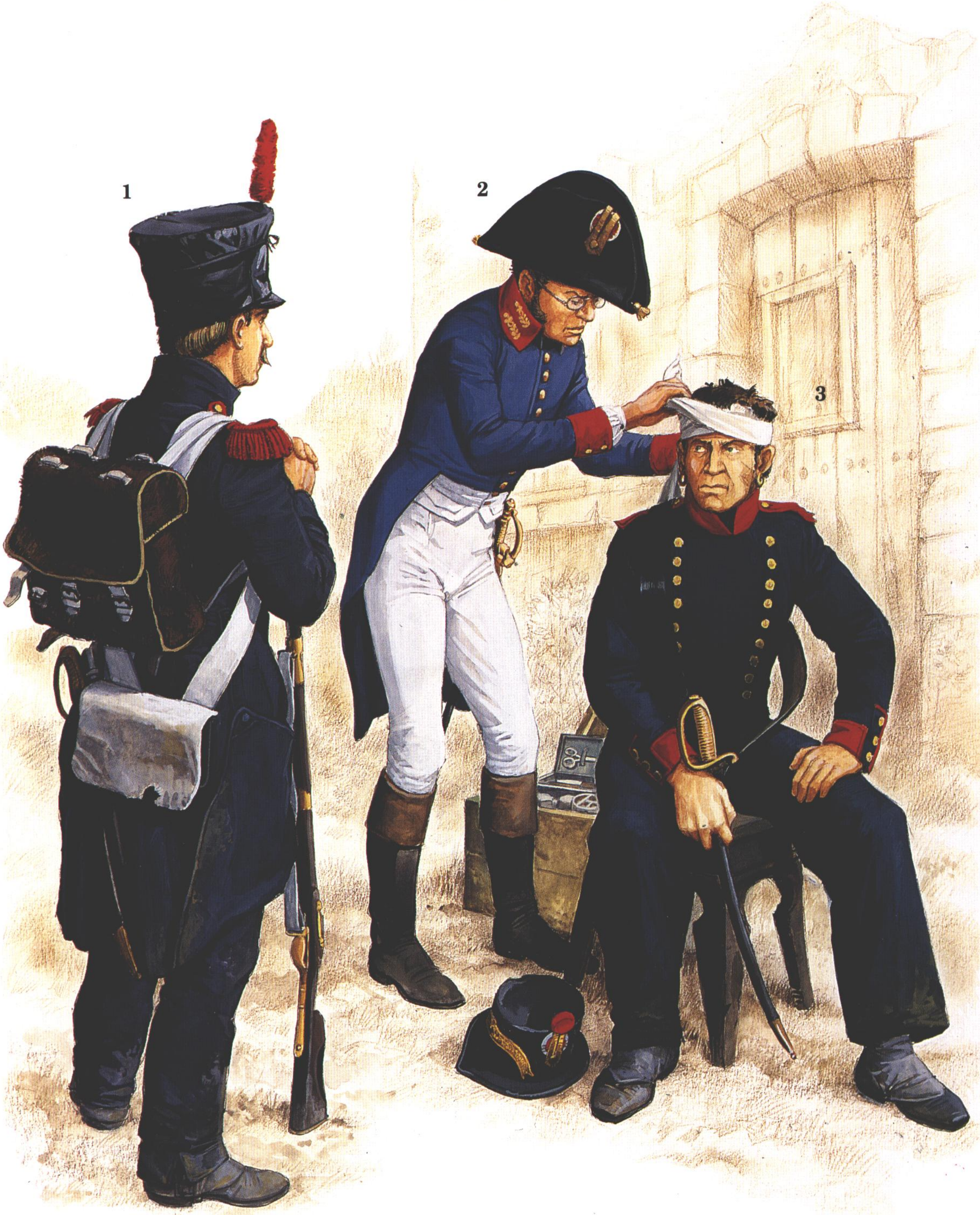
1: Sailor, 44^{e} Equipage, Spain, 1810-11
2: Sailor, 24^{e} Bataillon des Equipages, 1808-11
3: First Master, Bataillons des Flotille, 1808-11



1: First Class Ouvrier, Ouvriers militaires de la Marine, 1808-12
2: Sailor, 34e Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1811-14
3: Navy Lieutenant, undress, 1804-15
4: Second Master, 46e Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1811-14



1: First Class Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1813-14
2: Navy Surgeon 2nd Class, undress, 1804-15
3: Sailor-Gunner, 9^{e} Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1814



H

the blue jacket had two rows of buttons set very close and almost touching each other. White stockings and pointed shoes with a small silver buckle or a large black bow completed their attire. There was also a fondness for red sashes and gold buttons.

Obviously, this was not what the Emperor had in mind. As he started rebuilding the fleet after Trafalgar, he eventually completely reorganised the crews into *Bataillons des Equipages*. On 1 April 1808 the Emperor decreed that each battalion of sailors would wear a uniform with distinctive facing colours and that each sailor would have a shako. This particular item was greeted with consternation by sailors in the ports of France, especially in Toulon where the shakos arrived ahead of the instructions, to the horror of the crews. Soon, however, the new uniform was taken into wear, cursed shakos included, amid a great deal of grumbling. The new uniforms consisted of the shako (usually shown with brass diamond-shape plate and white cords) with pom-pom of the facing colour; dark blue *paletot* with brass buttons and collar, cuffs, shoulder straps and pipings of various colour; blue waistcoat; dark blue or white trousers; grey linen gaiters; and black cravat (see plate F). General Combis was detached from the army to devise the new uniform and he came up with myriad facing colours. Those of the first 53 battalions were as follows:

Battalion	*Collar, cuffs, shoulder straps*	*Piping*
1	Dark blue	Red
2	Dark blue	Green
3	Dark blue	Orange
4	Sky blue	Sky blue
5	Dark blue	Light green
6	Dark blue	Yellow
7	Sky blue	Dark blue
8	Dark blue	Pink
9	Red	Red
10	Red	Dark blue
11	Red	Sky blue
12	Red	Green
13	Red	Orange
14	Dark yellow	Sky blue
15	Dark blue	White
16	Red	Light green
17	Dark yellow	White
18	Dark yellow	White
19	Red	Yellow
20	Red	White
21	Red	Pink
22	Red	Violet
23	Dark yellow	Light green
24	Dark yellow	Pink
25	Dark yellow	Violet
26	Dark yellow	Green
27	Orange	Orange
28	Orange	White
29	Orange	Dark blue
30	Green	White
31	Dark yellow	Dark blue
32	Dark yellow	Red
33	Sky blue	Red
34	Sky blue	Green
35	Sky blue	Orange
36	Sky blue	Violet
37	Sky blue	Light Green
38	Sky blue	Yellow
39	Sky blue	White
40	Sky blue	Pink
41	Orange	Sky blue
42	Orange	Pink
43	Orange	Light green
44	Orange	Green
45	Green	Green
46	Green	Red
47	Green	Orange
48	Green	Violet
49	Green	Yellow
50	Green	Pink
51	Green	Dark blue
52	Green	Sky blue
53	Violet	Dark blue

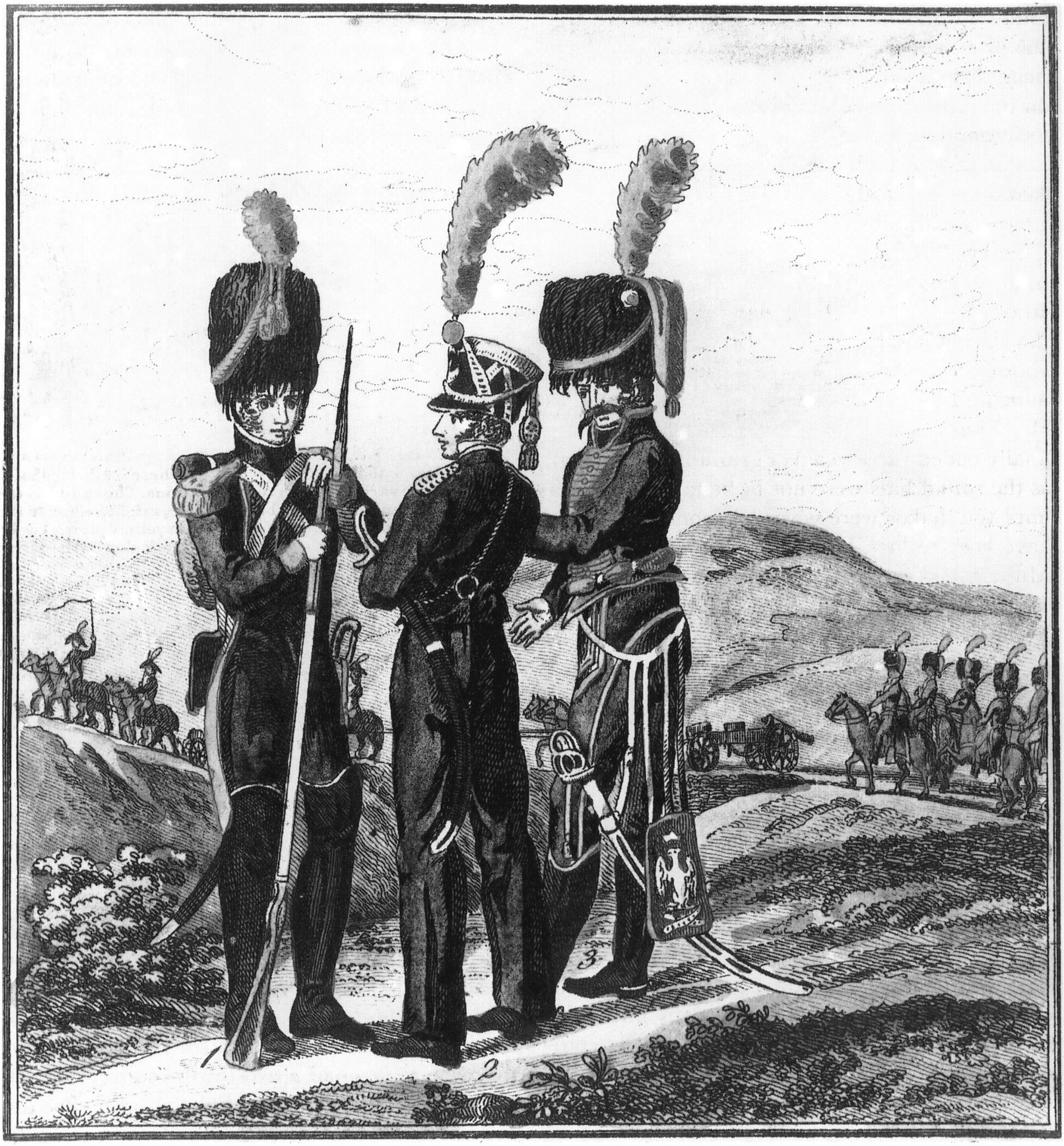
These facings applied to the ships' battalions only, known as *Equipages de Haut-Bord* from 1810. The *Flotille* (battalions from 1808 and *Equipages* from 1810) did not have such distinctions and their facings, pipings and pom-poms were to be completely dark blue.

The masters were to wear a coat with long tails and were allowed to wear breeches instead of trousers. This was besides the *paletot*, and each master also had a dark blue undress *redingote*. The *premier maîtres* had an inch-and-a-quarter-wide gold lace edging to the collar and the cuffs, the *second maîtres* had the lace on the collar only, and the *contre-maîtres* had a two-thirds-of-an-inch-wide gold lace on the collar only. From August 1808 the various trades were identified by badges worn on the left lower sleeve: a cannon for gunnery, a star for pilots, an axe for shipwrights, a triangle for sailing and so on, to be embroidered in gold for the *premier* and *second maîtres* and in yellow for the others.

It is important to note that commissioned officers did not wear the uniform of the *Equipage* they commanded but the 1804 uniform for navy officers.

The armament of the sailors had always been an informal affair with sabres, pistols, sea-service muskets, buccaneer muskets, boarding pikes and

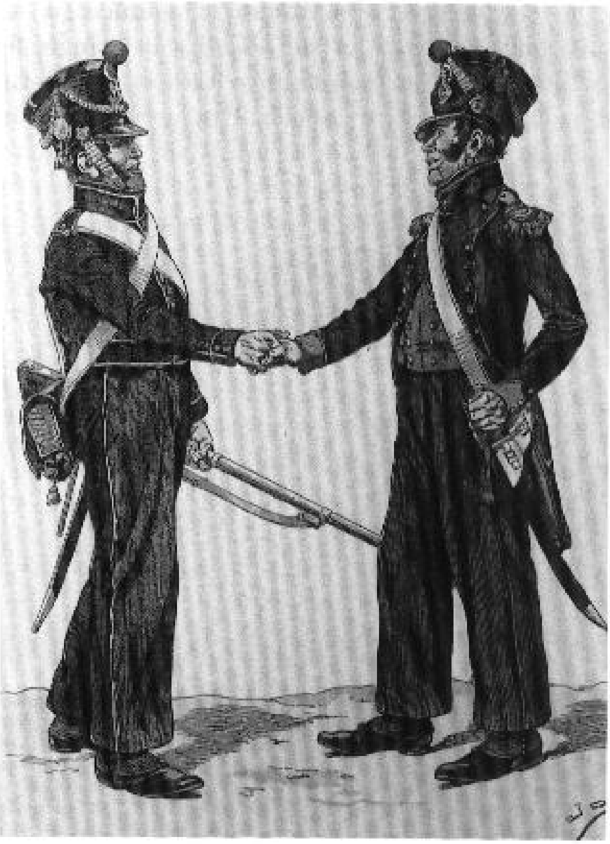
The central figure on this print by Berka and Zimner (No. 18) published in Prague, *c.*1809, is a sailor of the Imperial Guard wearing an undress dark blue *paletot* with orange-yellow lace on the collar and brass scale shoulder straps. The shako has a large red plume, brass chin-scales and orange-yellow bands and tassels. The figure to the left is a gunner of the Foot Artillery of the Imperial Guard and to the right a gunner of the Horse Artillery of the Imperial Guard. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)



axes issued before action. The cartridge boxes and belting were usually black and of peculiar models. The 1808 reform swept all that away. From then on all NCOs (*maîtres*, etc.) and sailors were issued a musket with its bayonet, a cartridge box, white accoutrements and even a knapsack. Only the NCOs were allowed sabres. But some old habits obviously remained. The gunners of the 9th *Haut-Bord* sent with the army in 1814 wore sabres with black belts, which is understandable as army gunners were also allowed a hanger. By and large, the issue of arms to sailors was a great improvement and officers, at first reluctant, soon reported on the unexpected ability of their men after some training.

We have seen that the shako was scorned, and that detested headgear was at last replaced. On 8 August 1811 Minister Décrès sent out a circular announcing that the Emperor had decided that round hats would be issued in future. The regulation round hat was to be plain, with a cockade on the side, a small pom-pom of the facing colour above, and a brass scroll in front bearing the number and name of the crew (see plates G and H). This was more to the liking of the navy and finally ended three years of grumbling, although, as the round hats were not to be taken into wear until the shakos were worn out, some crews may have had 'to look like soldiers' until early 1812. Military-style embellishments were also added as we see green epaulettes with red crescents sported by an NCO at about 1809 and red epaulettes and plumes in Hamburg in 1813. Undoubtedly, there were many more deviations such as red waistcoats.

By and large, this remained the uniform of the seamen of the French navy until the fall of Napoleon in 1814. When Napoleon came back from Elba in 1815 the uniform prescribed on 2 May for the 20 sailors' regiments was an all-dark-blue *paletot* without facing colours, trimmed with brass buttons, dark blue waistcoat and trousers, a round hat as before, a fatigue cap, beige greatcoat, white trousers, black gaiters, weapons and equipment as in the Marine Artillery. Most of these units were not raised, but La Gravière recalled his surprise at seeing men dressed in uniforms that were very much like the old *Haut-Bord* crews as he was coming into Brest in late June 1815 from La Réunion. On the other hand, Leconte, who was in the 9th Regiment, recalled it never received any clothing. When disbanded in July 1815, the men of the 9th were not compensated for clothing by the royal government—a legal robbery—so they all took off their tricolour cockades, put on potato peels in lieu of the white cockade of the Bourbons, and marched off to their homes in all directions, snorting like pigs!

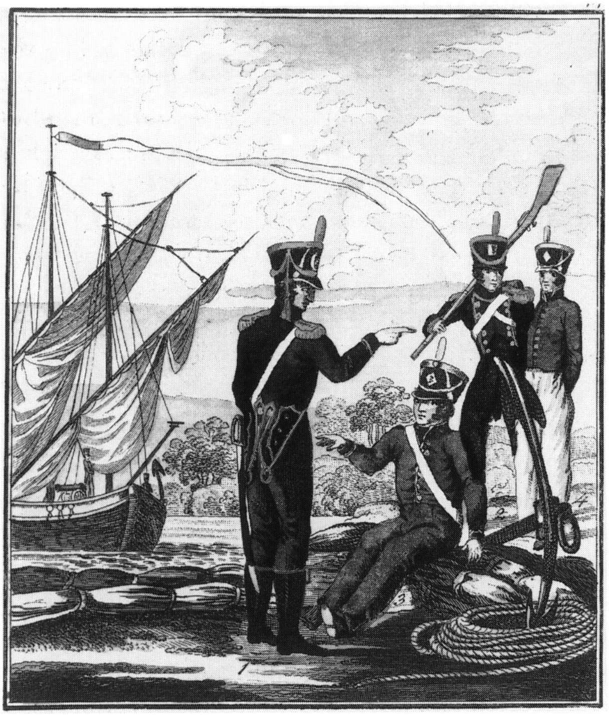


Sailors of the *Bataillons de la Marine Impériale* as seen in Strasbourg, *c.*1808–11. The dress of these sailors shows considerable variation with the regulations. The sailor on the left, perhaps an NCO as a sabre is visible, might belong to the 6th Bn., which had dark blue facings with yellow piping but he appears to be wearing a single-breasted jacket rather than the naval *paletot*. His shako has yellow cords with a red pompom. The sailor on the right is surely an NCO as he has a sabre and wears an Army-style coat of dark blue with dark blue collar and lapels, red piping, red pointed cuffs and turnbacks (with anchors), shako with red cords and pompom, green epaulettes with yellow-edged red trim, and a red waistcoat which was popular with French sailors instead of the regulation dark blue. These variations make it impossible to determine the unit depicted. Plate by JOB after the Wurtz and Kold collections. (Collège militaire royal, Saint-Jean, Canada)

Administration, Engineers & Medical Officers

Apart from the purely naval officers, sailors and troops, the officers of the *Administration navale*—the successors to the *officiers de plume* of the old navy—became more numerous and important. To set them apart they were assigned distinctive uniforms during August 1800 instead of the naval personnel's dark blue. This was perhaps to acknowledge their unpopularity with the sailing officers as well as to make it known that these administrative officers were to be noticed by all. Inspectors had a scarlet coat with dark blue cuffs and collar, trimmed with double green silk embroidery (on the collar, cuffs and pocket flaps), gilt buttons, bicorn hat with a green cockade loop; white waistcoat and breeches. Sub-inspectors wore the same but without the embroidery on the pocket flaps. Commissaries had a sky-blue coat with red collar and cuffs, with white turnbacks, waistcoats and breeches; bicorn with a white cockade loop and gilt buttons. Rank was distinguished by white silk embroidery; chief commissaries had a wide double white silk embroidery on collar, cuffs and pocket flaps; principal commissaries had the same minus the pocket flaps; ordinary commissaries had a single embroidery on the cuffs and collar (see plate C); sub-commissary on the collar only; principal clerks had no embroidery, ordinary clerks a red collar only.

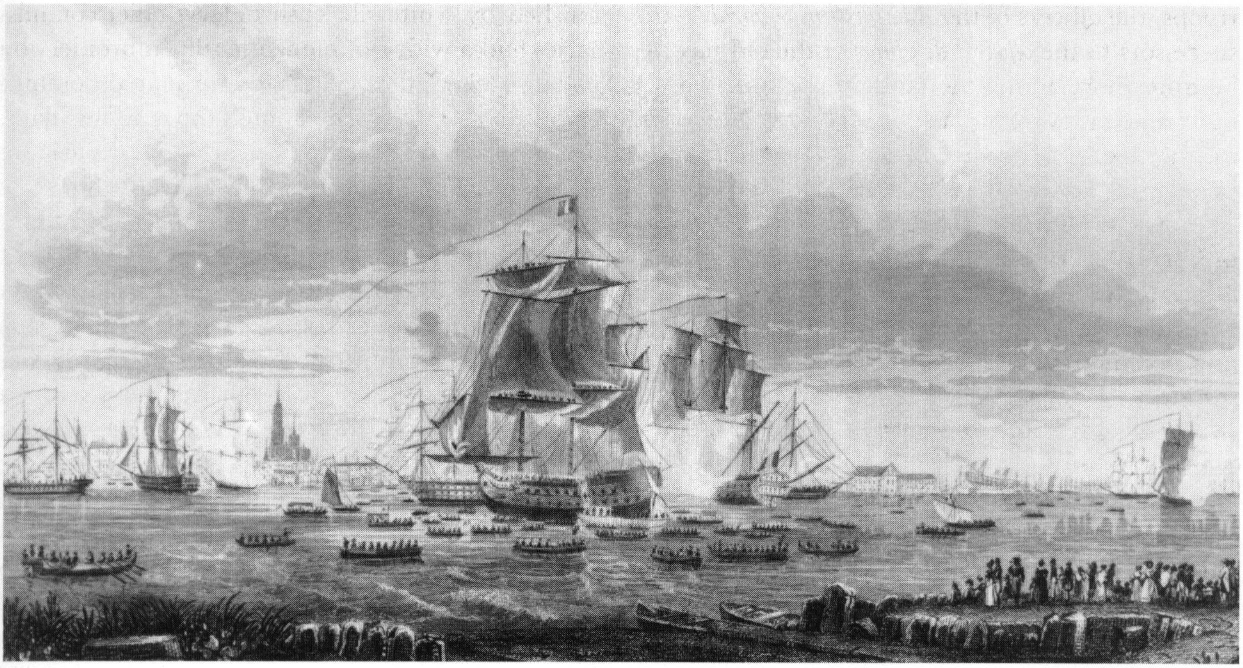
French 'Mariniers' (sailors) are shown as the second and fourth figure from the left on this print by Berka and Zimner (No. 14) published in Prague *c.* 1809. These were sailors detached to the *Grande Armée* to man the boats. They wear shakos, blue single-breasted jackets piped red with brass buttons, and blue and white pantaloons. Both figures wear shakos as ordered for sailors in 1808. It is impossible to attribute these figures to a battalion, especially as the jacket might be an undress garment. The other two figures are of Pontoon troops and wear all-dark-blue coats with red piping and brass buttons. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)



In May 1804, the inspectors lost their scarlet coats and the administrative uniform became sky-blue with silver buttons for all. Embroidery was now in silver. There was both a dress and an undress uniform, the description of which took many pages in the decree, and is too long to relate here. For example, the undress uniform of a sub-commissary included: a sky-blue coat with scarlet cuffs and stand and fall collar; single silver embroidery on the collar only; sky-blue turnbacks; white waistcoat; sky-blue breeches; bicorn with silver cockade loop. Administrative officers were not allowed to wear epaulettes but did have a silver-hilted straight small sword in a black scabbard. From 1804, ordinary clerks wore an all-sky-blue uniform with silver buttons.

The *Génie maritime* was another branch of officers. These naval engineers responsible for shipbuilding in April 1800 were assigned a dark blue coat with black velvet collar, cuffs and lapels; gold buttons and epaulettes; red waistcoat; dark blue breeches, and bicorn with a gold cockade loop. The inspectors had two gold embroidered buttonholes on the collar, five to each lapel and three to each cuff; the construction chiefs had embroidery on the collar only; ordinary engineers had no embroidery and sub-engineers had no lapels. In May 1809, the lapels were abolished, the collar was specified to be stand and fall and the waistcoat was ordered to be buff. From February 1804 hydrographic engineers wore dark blue coat with black velvet collar and cuffs, gold buttons, white waistcoat, white or dark blue breeches, and a bicorn with gold cockade loop. They had no epaulettes but had gold lace embroidery rank distinctions, e.g. a first class hydrographic engineer had a single lace embroidered at the collar and cuffs while the second class had it on the collar only, while his hat cockade loop was of yellow silk.

The final, but certainly not the least important, branch was the *Service de santé*—the medical offi-



The harbour of Antwerp in 1810, which Napoleon built up as a major military naval base and construction centre for large warships. The British were considerably worried by this base but their attempt to take it during 1809 was a miserable failure. Further attempts in 1813 and 1814 also failed. It was only by order of Louis XVIII, after Napoleon's abdication, that the port finally surrendered, on 5 May 1814 (National Library of Canada)

cers. Divided into three types, they served on board warships, and in hospitals run by the navy in France and in the French colonies. First came the *médecins* (doctors), then the *chirurgiens* (surgeons), and finally the *pharmaciens* (pharmacists), each with their own uniforms. They were assigned dark blue uniforms with various facings for each type in 1798, then a somewhat lighter shade of blue in 1800 with different facings to previously. Yet another change in May 1804 remained the order of dress until the end of the First Empire. The 1804 uniform decree is very detailed and only a short summary can be attempted here. The coat was medium blue, without lapels, with black velvet collar and cuffs for the *médecins*, scarlet for the *chirurgiens*, and dark green for the *pharmaciens*; medium blue lining, and gold buttons (nine in front, three to each cuff and pocket). There was a medium blue waistcoat for the *médecins*, and the respective collar colour for the others; and medium blue breeches for all. A bicorn with a gold cockade loop was worn while, in summer, white waistcoat and breeches were allowed. A gilt hilted sword of the line infantry model was carried by a black waistbelt with gold belt-plate. The undress coat had a stand and fall collar and two small buttons under the cuff.

There was a rank system in three classes, besides chiefs and auxiliaries, all of which were denoted by a fairly complicated lacing system for all the officers of the *Service de santé*. For example, the first class officer's dress coat had gold lace at the two buttonholes at each side of the collar, as well as the nine in front and the three at each cuff and pocket flap. The undress coat had the same lacing, but only at the collar and cuffs. The second class officers had the lace at the collar, cuffs and pocket flaps only of their dress coats, and only at the collar of the undress (see plate H). Third class officers had lace on the collar and cuffs of the dress coat and only one lace on each side of the collar of the undress.

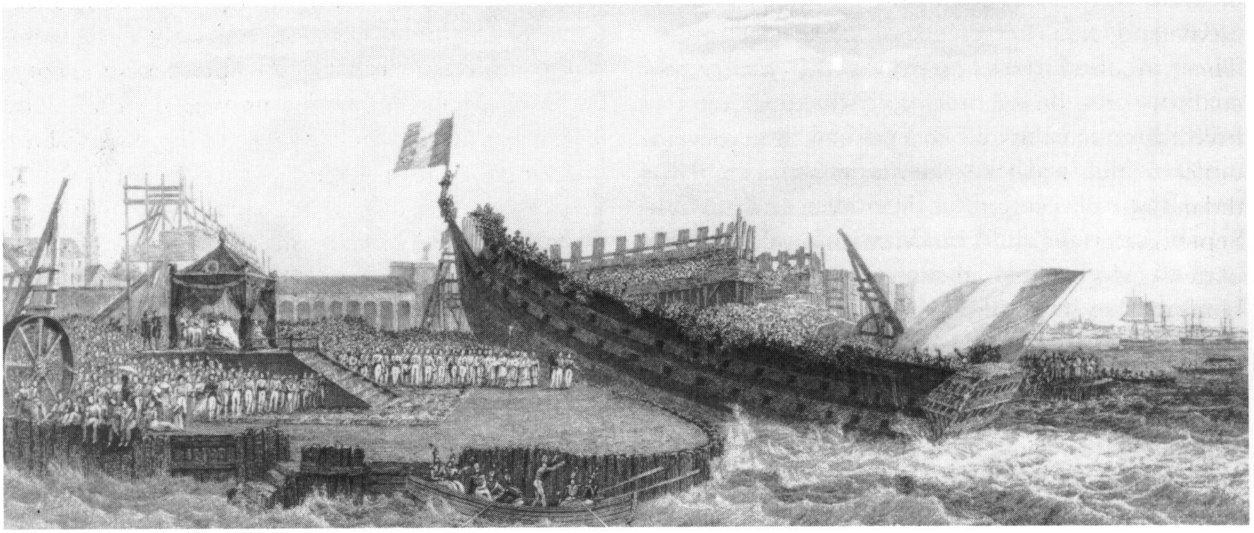
Ouvriers de la Marine

A crucial problem at the time Napoleon became First Consul was obtaining a force of *ouvriers* for the shipyards to build warships. This workforce was somewhat turbulent during the Revolution but, as the navy declined, many turned to other trades. Following the establishment of maritime prefectures in April 1800, the orderly administration of the ports was made easier, but there were simply not enough workers. Finally, in October 1802, a decree ordered 2,000 conscripts to be sent to the military ports to work at shipbuilding. Formed into companies, subject to military discipline, they lived in barracks and worked under the guidance of naval engineers. Napoleon had found an effective way of providing disciplined workers for his shipyards. The *Ouvriers-conscrits* (sailors and workers) were each issued a round hat and a dark blue *paletot* with brass buttons. Rather pleased with this workforce, Napoleon ordered two regiments of *Marins et ouvriers* to be raised at Brest on 14 December 1806, each regiment having 2,500 men recruited from men 'without occupations'. Besides doing shipbuilding work, these regiments had musket and artillery drill and did garrison duties. Three more such regiments were raised at Toulon, Rochefort and Lorient, but the combination of the duties of a shipwright with that of a soldier proved awkward, and the regiments were finally disbanded on 28 June 1810.

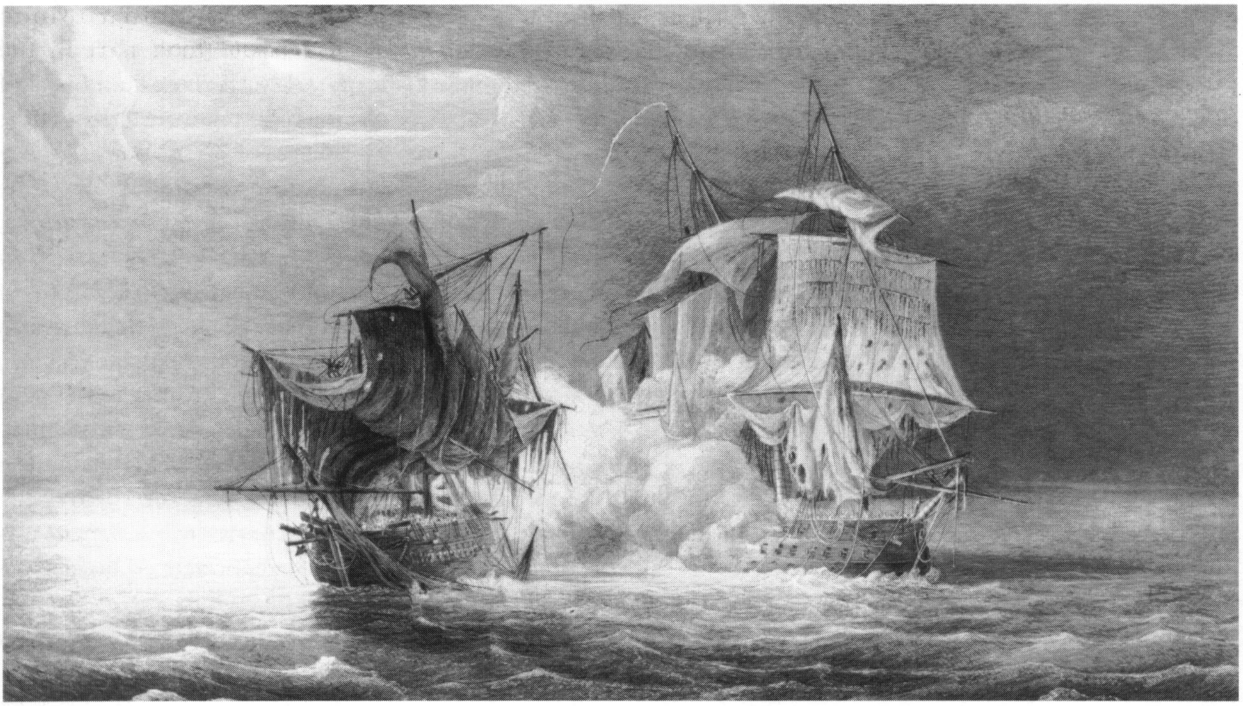
What had occurred in the meantime to fill the void was the raising, decreed on 15 January 1808, of a corps of *Ouvriers militaires de la Marine*. This was a purely military unit, somewhat like the Army's engineer troops; at first of 18 companies, it soon grew to several battalions. A *Bataillon d'Espagne* was sent to Spain, where it served from 1810 to 1813. The *Bataillon du Danube* took part in the Russian campaign of 1812 and the defence of Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland) in August 1813. The 1st and 2nd Bns. 'de l'Escault' and the 8th Bn. took part in the German campaign in 1813. The uniform (see plate G) of these troops was a dark blue coatee with black velvet collar, cuffs and lapels; dark blue turnbacks piped red (the turnbacks having an anchor and two crossed axes as ornaments); brass buttons; dark blue waistcoat and breeches; shako with red band and pom-pom and yellow cockade loops, and long grey gaiters. First class *ouvriers* had two red fringed epaulettes; second class had red shoulder straps, and third class blue shoulder straps piped red. The officers had gold epaulettes and wore boots and gorgets on duty. Working dress was a fatigue cap, *paletot* and trousers, all in dark blue, with black short gaiters as well as a linen smock and trousers. The *Ouvriers militaires de la Marine* were disbanded during May of 1814, re-raised in May 1815 and disbanded again in July and August.

Coast Guard Artillery and Auxiliary Corps

Coast guard militia units have existed in France since the Middle Ages, but were organised into an increasingly formal structure during the 18th century. In 1778 all these units were transformed into coast guard artillery militia units, which were called up for part-time or full-time service. They had a dark blue uniform with sea-green facings. As a result of the Revolution, this institution was



Launching of the *Friedland*, an 80-gun ship of the line, at Antwerp on 2 May 1810 in the presence of Napoleon and Empress Marie-Louise. After Trafalgar, Napoleon sought to rebuild the French fleet on a large scale, and a major construction programme was started. But building a powerful fleet takes time, which ran out when he had to abdicate in 1814. (National Library of Canada)



The French frigate *La Vénus* beats the *Ceylon* in a night combat off La Réunion in the Indian Ocean on 16 September 1809. The French also had their successes in such fights in spite of the popular opinion that the Royal Navy always won during the Napoleonic period. (National Library of Canada)

abolished on 9 September 1792, and was to be replaced by embodying local National Guards—a solution which did not work too well. On 10 September 1799 some 130 companies of Volunteer Coast Guard Artillery were to be raised to serve with three battalions of Coast Guard Grenadiers, but this sketchy organisation was disbanded on 16 June 1802, except for four battalions which were sent to fight Toussaint L'Ouverture in Saint-Domingue. Napoleon, a gunner himself, understood the need for such a corps and, on 28 May 1803, he decreed the formation of 100 companies of *Canonniers gardes-côtes* and 28 companies of auxiliary sedentary *Canonnier gardes-côtes sédentaires*. Their uniform decreed on 28 May was a dark blue coat with sea-green lapels, dark blue waistcoat and breeches, and brass buttons. This was the same uniform as the pre-1789 corps, and it would seem it did not please everyone as, a few months later, on 1 September 1803, a new uniform was decreed (see plate D). This consisted of a white coat with dark blue collar, cuffs, lapels and piping, red cuff flaps, white turnbacks, brass buttons, white waistcoat and breeches, plain bicorn, and infantry musket with bayonet and cartridge box with sling. Valmont shows this uniform but with white cuff flaps, blue turnbacks, red epaulettes, pom-pom to the hat, white pantaloons and a sabre with red sword knot. Vernet's and Viel de Castel's prints published a few years after the Empire depicted the blue-faced sea-green uniform with shakos. This might indicate that both uniforms were worn concurrently for a while—especially as they were to last at least five years. By 1811 the corps had grown to 140 companies, totalling about 17,000 men, of which half were always on duty. During 1812–14 most were mobilised on permanent coast duty, and some were detached to the army artillery in January 1814. On 20 April 1814 the corps was disbanded, but 80 companies were raised again by Napoleon on 24 April 1815 but disbanded for good on 14 August 1815.

There were a number of armed and uniformed auxiliary units serving in the ports of France during the Revolution and the first Empire. The police duties were at first carried out by 'maritime' detachments of the *Gendarmerie* but, on 24 August 1803, a distinct *Gendarmerie maritime* was organised for the ports, which wore the same uniforms as the *Gendarmerie nationale* except for distinctive buttons. According to a bill of May 1792, firemen at Toulon wore dark blue *paletots* with black collar, brass buttons, dark blue waistcoat and breeches. Clothing bills of 1793 specified that guards—roughly our modern 'security guards'—at the gates of Rochefort harbour were to wear a dark blue coat, red turnbacks, white cuffs and collar, vertical pockets, and red waistcoat and breeches. Office guards had the same but with red cuffs, horizontal pockets, dark blue collar and dark blue waistcoat and breeches. The guards for ships wore a dark blue coat and coat cuffs, red collar and turnbacks, vertical pockets, dark blue waistcoat and breeches. All had white metal buttons. A March 1803 bill for the Rochefort *Gardes-chiourmes* (convict guards) called for 250 dark blue coats with dark blue collar, cuffs, lapels and turnbacks, red piping edging the lapels, white waistcoat and breeches, and dark blue fatigue caps.

Conclusion

Napoleon may not have understood a great deal about the navy compared to the command of vast armies, but it is obvious that he understood the influence of naval power. The notion that he abandoned the navy after Trafalgar must be revised. In spite of his continental preoccupations, he rebuilt the fleet, and his 1808 militarisation permanently transformed the way sailors would behave on warships. At first resented, this measure was soon lauded, brought back for good in 1825 and then imitated by other countries. In 1813 about 130,000 men served in the Imperial navy—about double the number from 1806—and the rapidly growing fleet was nearing 200 ships of the line and frigates. This considerable investment was largely destroyed just a year later. During the whole period the French navy had a more fundamental problem, its high command; as Napoleon explained in his *Mémorial* at St. Helena: 'I especially liked sailors, I admired their courage and their patriotism—but I never found between them and myself the man who would have made them worthy ... I would have made him our Nelson, and things would have taken a different course.'

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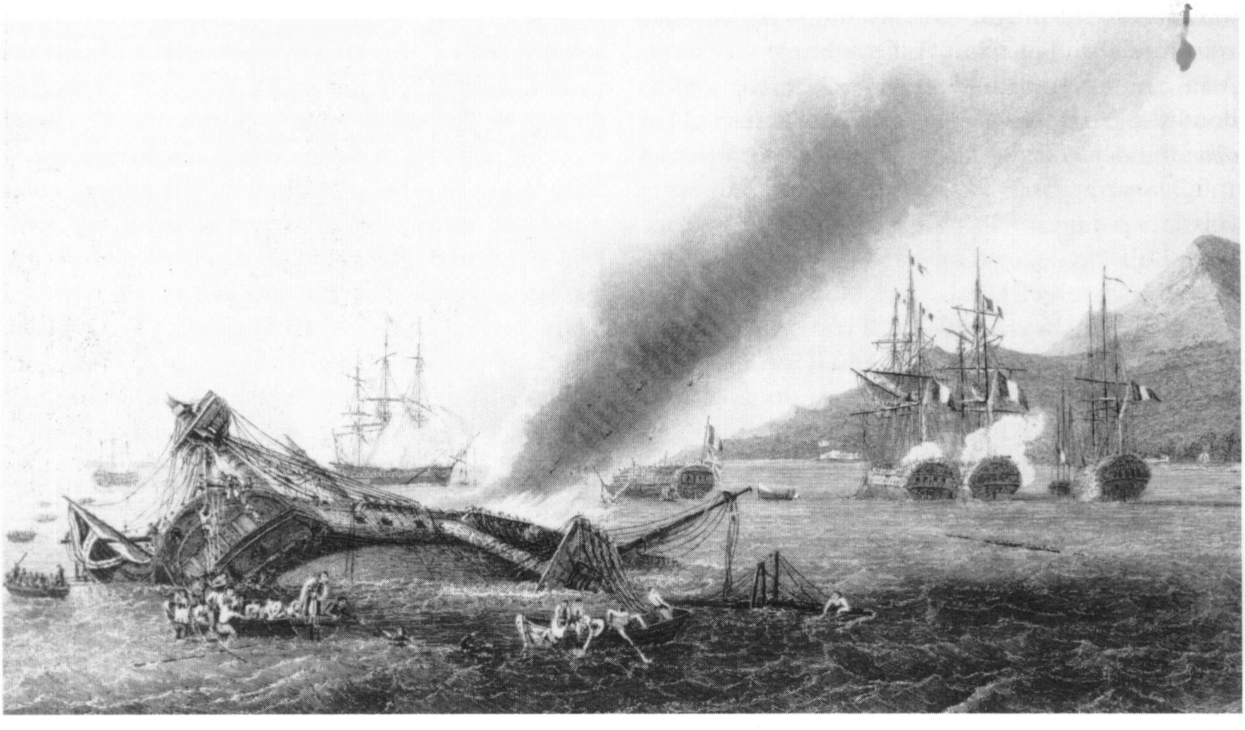


The battle of Grand Port at Ile-de-France on 23 August 1810. The British attacking squadron was completely destroyed, losing its four frigates in this little-known French naval success. In the foreground, HMS *Magicienne* is sinking, HMS *Sirius* directly behind is on fire and about to blow up, HMS *Nereide* has no masts and is captured flying the tricolour. HMS *Iphigénie*, at far left, surrendered a few days later. The French defending squadron under Captain Duperré included the frigates *Bellonne, Minerve* and *Ceylon*, shown on the right. The action was to no avail and the French island was overwhelmed by vastly superior Anglo-Indian forces in December. Print after the painting by P.-J. Gilbert. (National Library of Canada)

1976) is excellent for finding studies on the Napoleonic French navy. Auguste Thomazi, *Les marins de Napoléon* (Paris, 1978); René Jouan, *Histoire de la marine française* (Paris, 1950); Albert Dépréaux, *Les uniformes des troupes de la marine, coloniales et nord-africaines* (Paris, 1931); Dulauney & Guittard, *Historique de l'artillerie de la marine* (Paris, 1889); V. Brun, *Guerres maritimes de la France: le port de Toulon* (Paris, 1861); G. Laignel, *L'Empéreur Napoléon et la marine française* (Paris, 1842); C. Northcote Parkinson, *War in the Eastern Seas, 1793–1815* (London, 1954); G. B. Malleson, *Final French struggles in India and in the Indian Seas* (London, 1878) will provide the reader with much data on the French navy and its personnel.

Many good contemporary memoirs have been published such as sailor Louis Garneray's *Voyages, aventures et combats* (many reprints); Marine artilleryman Moreau de Jonnès, *Adventures in the Revolution and under the Consulate* (New York, 1970); Jurien de la Gravière's *Souvenir d'un Amiral* (Paris, 1860); G. Leconte, *Mémoires pittoresques d'un officier de marine* (Paris, 1859). The *Correspondance de l'Empéreur Napoléon 1er* (Paris, 1853–70); *Recueil des lois relatives à la marine et aux colonies* (published yearly). *Correspondance de Napoléon avec le ministre de la marine* (Paris, 1838) contain much data relative to all aspects of naval troops. The articles in the well-illustrated naval periodical *Neptunia* from 1975 to 1983 have much information on uniforms. Arms and accoutrements are well covered in Jean Boudriot, *Armes à feu françaises, modèles d'ordonnance, cahier no. 14: Marine & Colonies 1777—an 13* (Paris, 1965) and Michel Pétard, *Equipements militaires*, vols. 3, 4 and 5 (Saint-Julien de Concelles, 1986–88).

The Plates

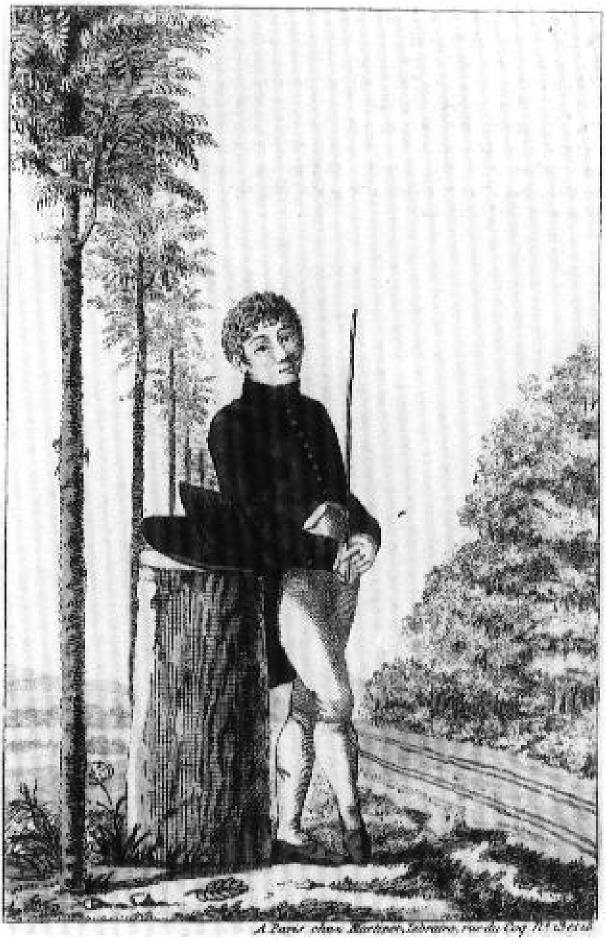
A1: Sailor, 1789–90

He wears a white and blue striped linen suit, which was popular with French sailors. A sash is tied around the waist and, although he could be wearing a round hat, he wears a cap with a tricolour cockade, and is showing another tricolour cockade to an insulted marine officer who is being restrained by his men. (Original suit illustrated in *Neptunia*, No. 146, 1982.)

A2: Fusilier, Corps royal des Canonniers-matelots, 1786–92

His uniform closely follows the 1786 regulation. Note the short-tailed coatee, the ventral cartridge box, the laced short gaiters, and the round hat turned up at the front. The collar is of the 3rd Division's colour: saxon green. (*Ordonnance du roi portant création de neuf Divisions de Canonniers-Matelots* ... 1 January 1786, official copies at the former

'Elève de Marine', *c.* 1811, wearing the full dress of the naval cadets belonging to the two *Ecoles spéciales de Marine*, which was established by the decree of 27 September 1810 at Brest and Toulon. The uniform was an all-dark-blue coat with gold buttons, a bicorn with a gold cockade loop, a red waistcoat and blue breeches. These last two items were obviously white in summer, as is shown on the print. There was also an undress uniform, all dark blue, consisting of round hat, *paletot* (with lapels), pantaloons and greatcoat. Plate No. 273 of the series *Troupes françaises* engraved by Maleuvre, published by Martinet. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

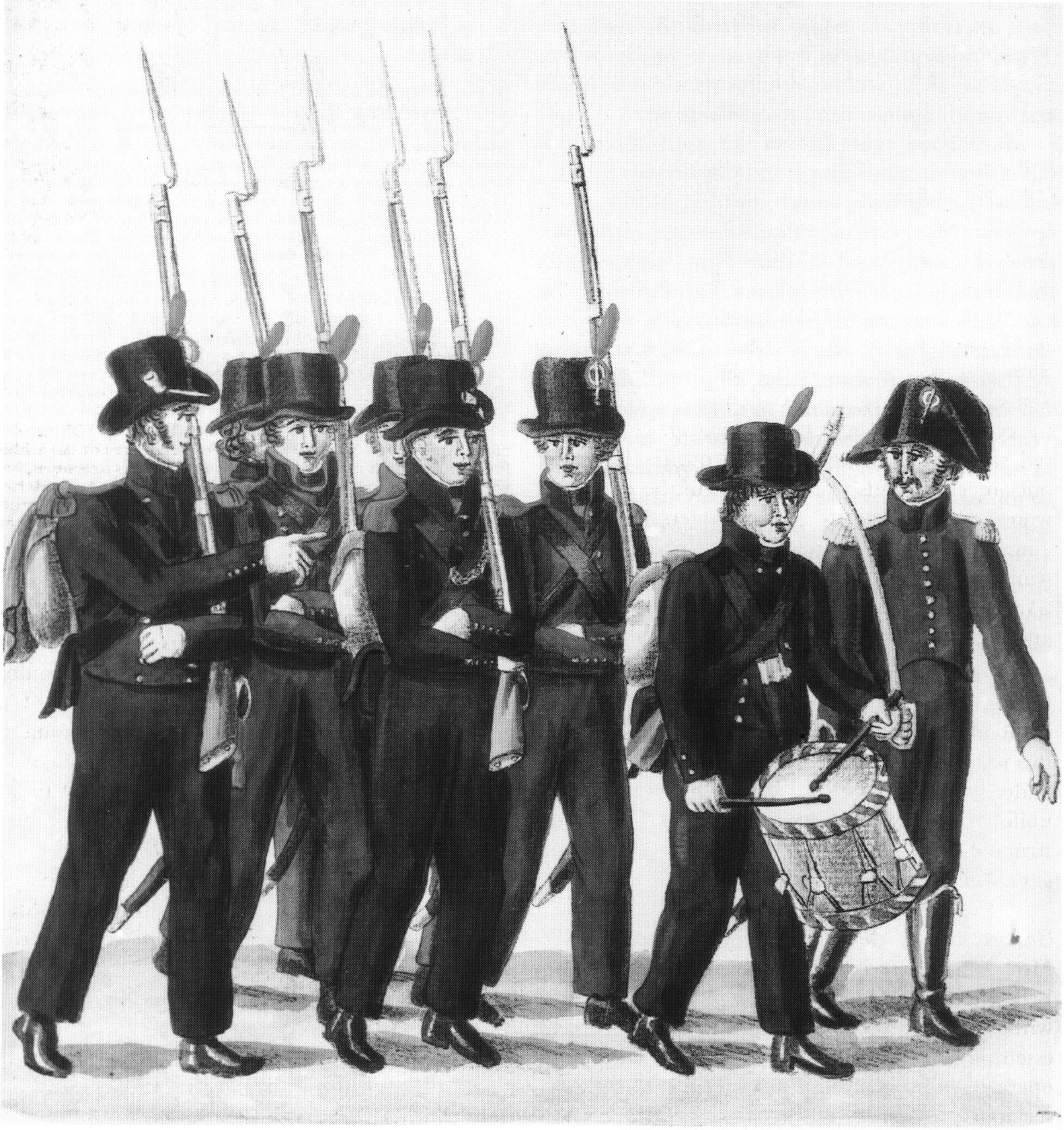

A Paris chez Martinet, Libraire, rue du Coq

Bibliothèque du Ministère de la Guerre and in the Archives de La Marine.)

French 'Seamen on the Alster' at Hambourg, 1813. They wear a completely dark blue *paletot* with red epaulettes and brass buttons. A red waistcoat with high collar can be seen underneath, with black stock, dark blue pantaloons, a round hat with red plume, and black accoutrements. The drummer has a brass drum with blue and white hoops. The officer wears a bicorn and a dark blue surtout with gold buttons and epaulettes, dark blue trousers and black hussar boots trimmed with gold lace and tassel. Plate by Christoph Suhr. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

A3: Officer, Corps royal des Canonniers-matelots, 1786–92

The printed 1786 regulations specify the same uniform as for the Royal Colonial Artillery Corps for officers of the *Canonniers-matelots*, yet it was the usual French practice for officers to wear the same colours as their men. The explanation is found in the manuscript additions of the official copies, which add red lapels and collar of the divisional colour (here shown for the 4th: lemon yellow), thus



making the uniform colour of the officers similar to the men. Officers wore bicorn hats and long tailed coats.

A4: Fusilier, Corps royal des Canonniers-matelots, 1786–92

This man wears the *redingote* specified in the 1786 regulation, which was a dark blue double-breasted garment with red cuffs and piping down the front, with a collar of the divisional colour (here shown for the 5th: sky blue).

B1: Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1792–94

The uniform worn by these regiments was embellished with some red trim on the waistcoat and gaiters. The 1791 crested helmet shown here was worn, probably with a red plume, as well as the bicorn hat. (Prints by Labrousse, Swebach and Perdoux in *Neptunia*, No. 125, 1977; *Journal militaire officiel*, decree of 25 Floréal, year 5.)

B2: Sailor, c. 1796

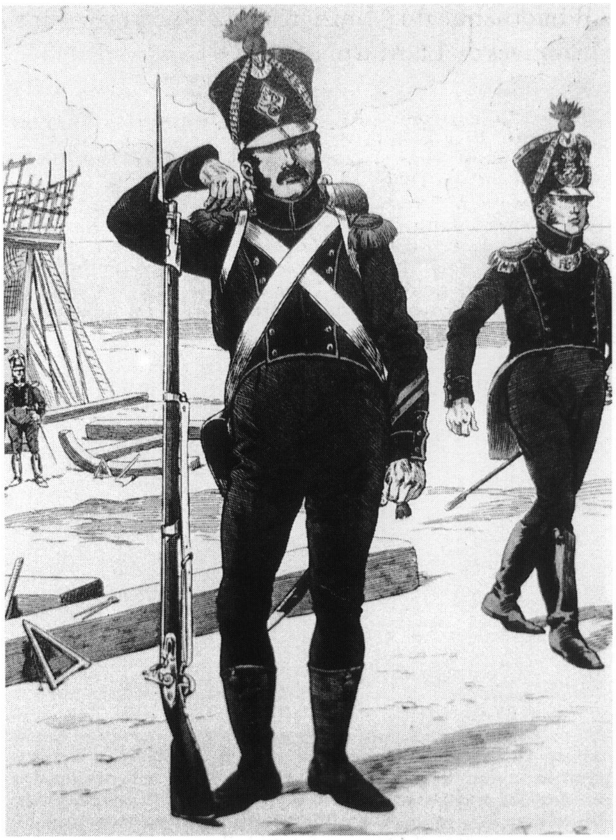
Shown according to contracts for sailors' clothing. The clothing was blue, brown and dark grey, and the caps were brown or grey. Our man has added a red sash to an otherwise drab outfit. The long buccaneer muskets were popular in the navy and were usually issued to sharpshooters in the riggings. The equipment was of black leather and the ventral cartridge box could hold 20 cartridges (Archives du port de Rochefort, série 1L3, box 28 and série 5E2, box 35.)

B3: Navy Officer, 1792–95

Captains and lower ranking officers were assigned this uniform on 19 September 1792. Some officers added lapels but most would have worn the uniform specified by the decree, which is reconstructed here. (*Recueil des lois relatives à la marine et aux colonies*. Paris, An 5, Vol. 3).

C1: Commissaire ordinaire de la Marine, 1800–04

From 1800 the administrative officers of the French navy were assigned a sky blue uniform without epaulettes. These 'paper pushers' were essential for naval inspections and supplies, and to operate the French rotational system of the sailor's service on warships. (*La Sabretache* No. 42, 1978.)



***Ouvriers militaire de la Marine* in 1812–15 by JOB after a contemporary print. The 1808 uniform colours of dark blue faced black with red piping and brass buttons are worn, but with the 1812 coatee. The enlisted man has red epaulettes while the officer has them in gold as well as a gilded gorget and a gold lace band on his shako. (Collège militaire royal, Saint-Jean, Canada)**

C2: Gunner, working dress, Marine Artillery, 1795–1803

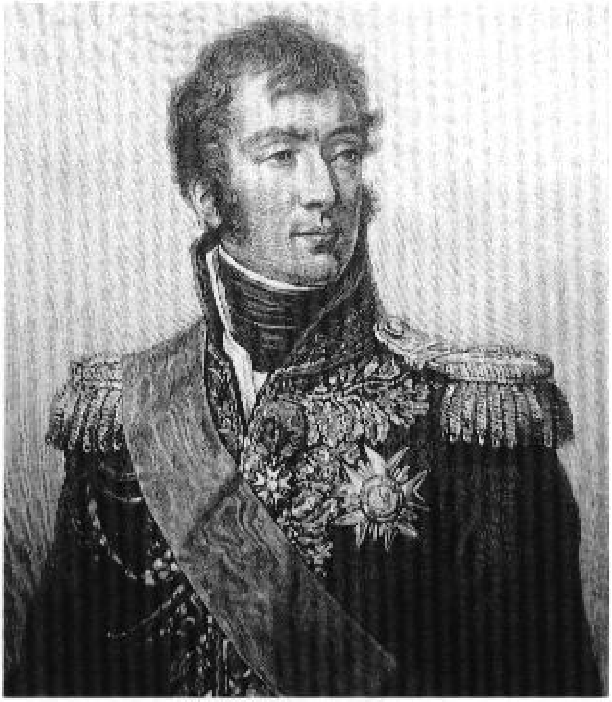
This simple dress was used for fatigues and 'all the artillery and infantry drills' at sea or on shore. Note the similarity with the dress of sailors. The fatigue cap probably had the corps insignia of crossed cannon over an anchor. (Decree of 3 Brumaire, An 4, *Recueil* . . ., Paris, An 6, Vol. 6.)

C3: Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1795–1803

This man wears the regular uniform of the corps. Black accoutrements, instead of the usual white, were worn by naval personnel and troops in this period.

C4: Fusilier, Légion Nautique, 1799–1801

This legion was part of the French forces in Egypt and served mostly in Alexandria. It was issued the colourful, locally made uniforms worn by the



Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, ably commaded the 6th Army Corps which consisted mostly of Marine artillery troops during the 1813 and 1814 campaigns. He first found his new naval troops somewhat unfamiliar with marches and bivouacs, but was soon impressed by their outstanding bravery. (Private collection)

French, but kept its round hats. The plate shows the issue of December 1799, which was worn until repatriation to France in September 1801. (A. Rigondaud, 'L'Armée d'Egypte', *Bulletin de la Société des collectioneurs de figurines historiques*, No. 2, mars 1961.)

C5: Sailors, c. 1800

Although some clothing was supplied by the navy, many sailors before 1804—perhaps most—often wore their own clothing, with regional features. The sailor on the left is from Provence, the one at right from Normandy. (Prints by Grasset de Saint-Sauveur.)

D1: Ship's Captain, c. 1802

From late 1795 to 1804 navy officers wore a stylish uniform. Embroidery was officially abolished in 1800 but it seems it was worn anyway, as on this figure; it is based on a portrait painted in May 1802 which also shows low hussar-style boots with tassels. (Portrait of Capt. Jean-Jacques Magendie in *Neptunia*, No. 145, 1982.)

D2: Gunner, Coast Guard Artillery, 1803

In September 1803 the corps of *Canonniers gardes-côtes* was assigned a white uniform, shown here as prescribed in the order. Besides service in the coastal batteries, a few men were detached with the expedition to Corfu during 1805. During 1814 some 27 companies were attached to the army artillery regiments and fought alongside them. (L. Hennet, 'Les milices gardes-côtes', *Revue maritime et coloniale* Vol. 88, 1886.)

D3: Sailor of the Flotille nationale, 1803–04

The sailors of the flotilla were assigned this distinctive uniform on 10 July 1803, which was worn until the 1804 naval uniform regulations. (*Neptunia*, No. 144, 1981)

E1: Sailor, Provisional Sailor's Battalion, Ile-de-France, 1810

This four-company unit was formed by Capt.-Gen. Decaen on 15 July 1810 from the crews of the frigates *Vénus*, *Manche* and *Astrée*, then at Port-Napoléon (now Port-Louis) in Ile-de-France. On 7 August a uniform consisting of a smock, a waistcoat, sailor's trousers and short gaiters, all in yellow nankeen, was prescribed. Red shirts were also worn. No headgear is mentioned but it was probably the round hat. Along with other troops (see MAA 211, *Napoleon's Overseas Army*) the battalion fought against the invading Anglo-Indian forces in November and December 1810. (De Poyen, *La guerre aux Iles de France et de Bourbon*, Paris, 1896; Adrien d'Epinay, *Renseignements pour servir à l'histoire de l'Ile de France . . .*, Mauritius, 1890.)

E2: Ship's Captain, full dress, 1804–1815

This captain of a ship of the line is uniformed according to the decree of 27 May 1804, which remained in force throughout Napoleon's reign. (Decree of 7 Prairial An XII, *Recueil . . .*, An 13, vol. 14.)

E3: Officer, 1st Marine Artillery, 1809

This figure is based on the recollections of Lt. Rieu, who joined the 1st Regt. in 1809 and was instructed by the colonel to add a gold flaming bomb to each side of the collar. He, and his fellow officers, even had to wear high 'Napoleon' boots with silver spurs which seemed like 'a bad joke' since the officers had 'no horses and were to go on board ships'. (Quoted in Dépréaux, p. 66–67.)

E4: First Class Master Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1807–12

The quarter-inch gold lace on the collar denote the 'master' while the two red fringed epaulettes and the hanger indicate First Class for this gunner in full dress with red plume and white gaiters. Turnback ornaments are not known but were probably a flaming bomb on the outside an an anchor on the inside turnback. (Decree of 12 Floréal An XI, *Recueil*..., An 12, vol. 13; Dépréaux, pp. 68.)

F1: Sailor, 44e Equipage, Spain 1810–11

The 43rd and 44th were sent to Spain in March 1810, where they fought until March 1813, mostly in the south and in Portugal. While in the Peninsula each unit was attached to a battalion of *Ouvriers militaires de la Marine* and they were given the temporary designations of 1st and 2nd *Equipages de la Flotille*. The unit designations were used somewhat loosely at this stage since a shako plate of the 44th bore its number and 'Régiment de Flotille'—yet it was neither a regiment nor part of the Flotilla crews. These units may have continued to use shakos while in Spain. (J. Sarramon, 'Les marins à terre en Espagne et au Portugal sous le premier empire', *La Sabretache*, No. 92-E, 1988.)

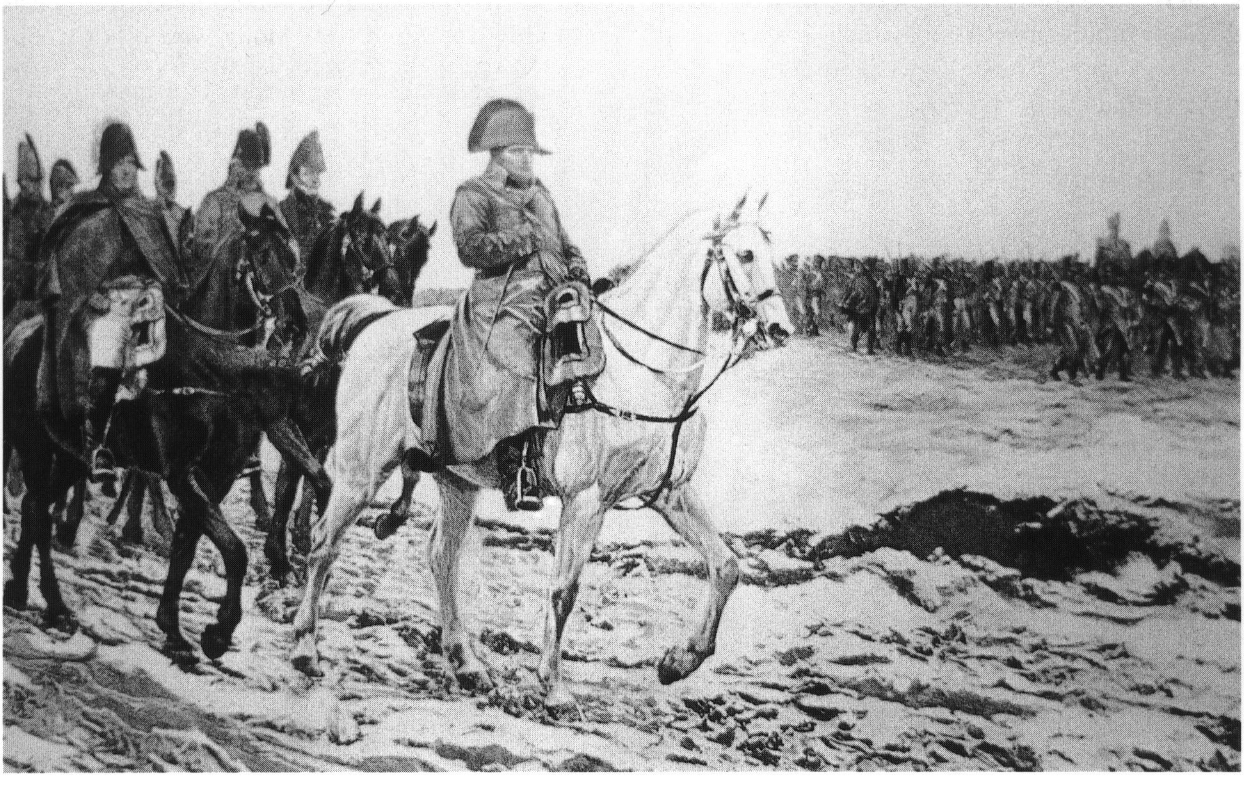
F2: Sailor, 24e Bataillon des Equipages, 1808–11

The 24th served on the 74-gun ship *Vétéran*, first in Lorient, then in Brest from 1812. Capt. Jurien de la Gravière recalled that many of its sailors were veterans who had served in the Indian Ocean. Napoleon's younger brother Jérome commanded the *Vétéran* for a few months in 1806 during his short and rather dubious naval career. (Decree of 1 April 1808, *Recueil* ..., Paris, 1808, vol. 17, Capt. Kéraval, 'Histoire d'une flotte du temps passé', *Revue maritime et coloniale*, vol. 104, 1890.)

F3: First Master, Bataillons de Flotille, 1808–11

The Flotilla battalions, who did mostly coastal and river service, wore completely dark blue *paletots* without colourful facings and in 1808 were as-

During the desperate 1813 and 1814 campaigns, Napoleon called upon many naval troops and sailors to serve with the land armies. The Marine artillery regiments showed great valour but sustained considerable losses. Print after Meissonier's painting '1814'. (Private collection)



signed shakos and infantry equipment. The star on the lower left sleeve denotes a pilot.

G1: First Class Ouvrier, Ouvriers militaires de la Marine, 1808–12

The 1808 coatee was of the light infantry cut, and the cuffs were pointed, according to Viel de Castel. The decree mentions a red pom-pom but prints show a red-over-black plume. (Decree of 15 January 1808, *Recueil*..., Paris, 1808, vol. 17; print by Viel de Castel, *c.* 1820, in *Neptunia*, No. 126, 1977; H. Vernet ad E. Lami, *Collection des uniformes des armées françaises de 1791 à 1814*, Paris, 1822.)

G2: Sailor, 34e Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1811–14

From August 1811 the shako was replaced by the glazed round hat with a brass scroll. A surviving example has: '34e EQUIPAGE [eagle] DE HAUT BORD' stamped on it. The 34th served at Antwerp on the 74-gun *Commerce de Lyon* until 1814 when the ship was laid up. (C. Blondiau, *Aigles et shakos du premier empire*, Paris, 1980.)

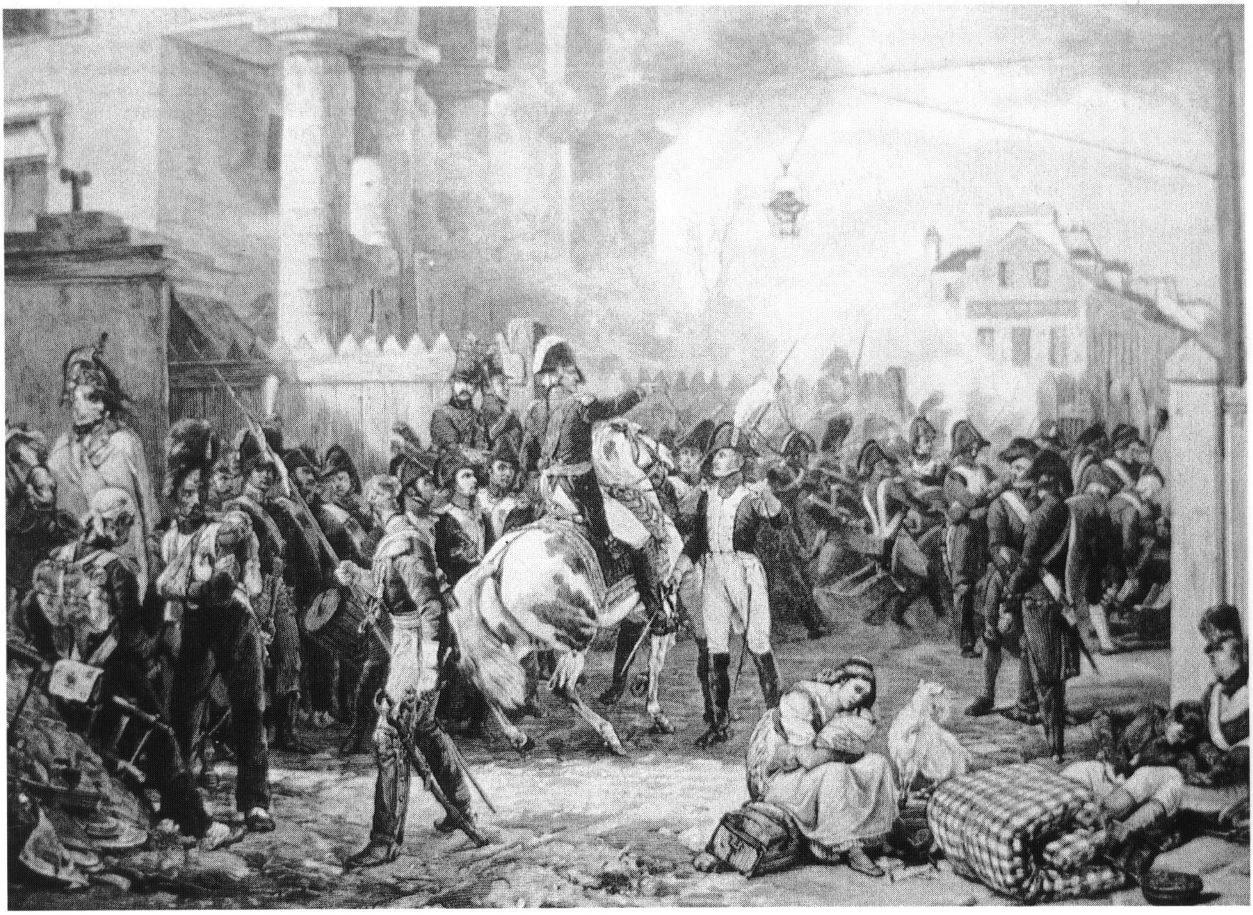
G3: Navy Lieutenant, undress, 1804–15

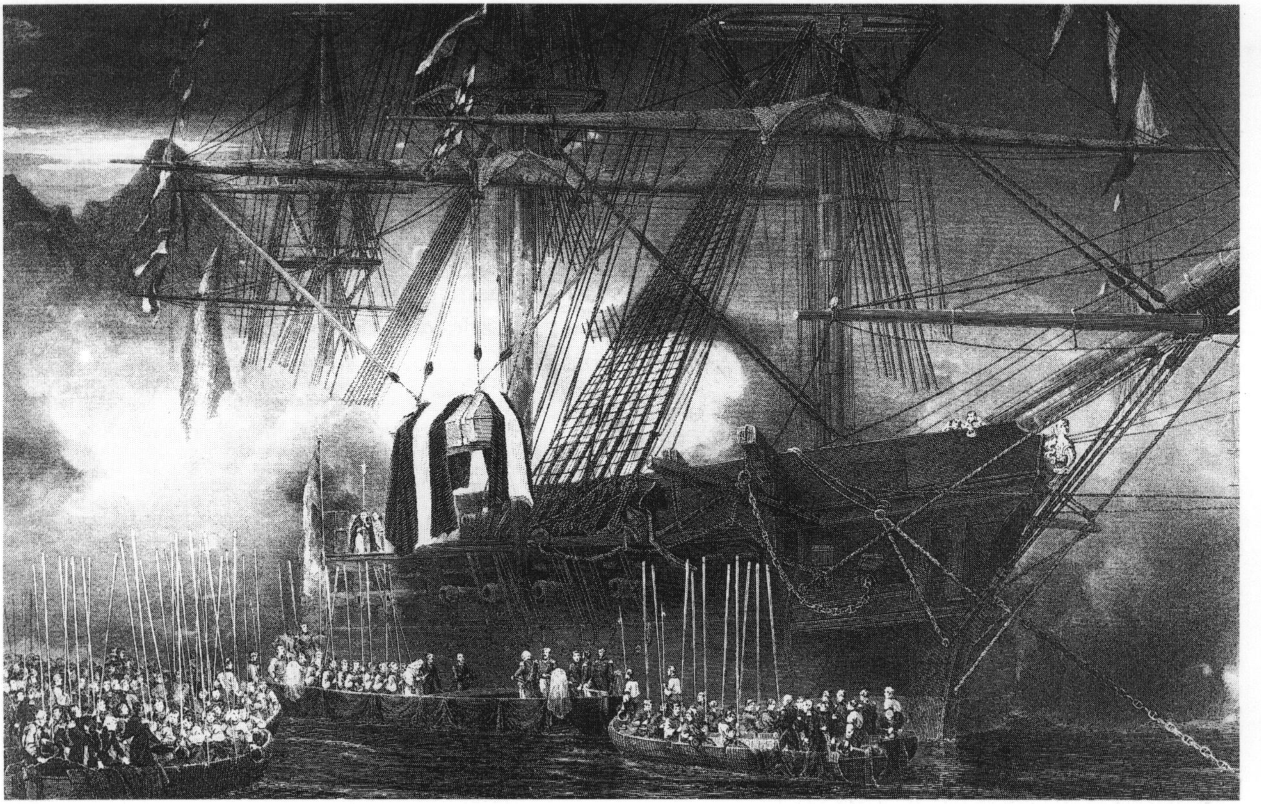
The 1804 decree specified an undress all-dark-blue coat. Lieutenants had lace only at the collar and we have added the non-regulation round hat and pantaloons popular with some naval officers. (Decree of 7 Prairial An XII, *Recueil*..., An 13, vol. 14; Leconte's *Mémoires pittoresques*...)

G4: Second Master, 46e Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1811–14

With the round hat and the *paletot*, masters were issued a long-tailed coat and allowed breeches, as here. The triangle on the left sleeve indicates a sailing master. The 46th served on the 110-gun ship *Commerce de Paris* based at Toulon. (Decree of 15 January 1808, *Recueil* ..., Paris, 1808, vol. 17;

The defence of Paris against the allies in late March 1814 involved a mixture of corps including detachments of naval troops. They fought bravely but in vain when the Paris National Guard gave up. This engraving after the painting by Horace Vernet shows the fighting at the Clichy gate. (Private collection)





Capt. Kéraval, 'Histoire d'une flotte ...', Brun, *Guerres maritimes* ...)

H1: First Class Gunner, Marine Artillery, 1813–14
Dark blue army artillery greatcoats were issued to the four regiments as they marched into Germany in 1813, which was essentially their dress in many battles until May 1814.

H2: Navy Surgeon 2nd Class, undress, 1804–15
The undress uniform of the 1804 regulations. The 1st Class Surgeons had two gold laces on the collar and three to each cuff, 2nd Class Surgeons laced the collar only. Medical staff did not have epaulettes. (Decree of 7 Prairial An XII, *Recueil* ..., An 13, vol. 14.)

The embarkation at St. Helena of the remains of the Emperor Napoleon on board the French Navy frigate *La Belle Poule* on 15 October 1840. Engraving after the painting by Eugène Isabey. (National Library of Canada)

H3: Sailor-Gunner, 9e Equipage de Haut-Bord, 1814
The companies of sailors-gunners sent to the *Grande Armée* in 1814 were the élite of the crews. Leconte, who was Lieutenant in the company from the 9th sent from Brest, mentioned his men only had a hanger on a black shoulder-belt for armament. At Vincennes their glazed round hats were laughed at by army gunners until the sailors drew their sabres. Some injuries were inflicted before order was restored. They fought the enemy until the closing battles around Paris and were indignant that the city's National Guard hardly fought at all. (Leconte's *Mémoires pittoresques* ...)